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# IONA

ITS HISTORY AND  
ANTIQUITIES

BY J. R. M. M. M. M. M.  
H. M. M. M. M.

ITS CARVED STONES  
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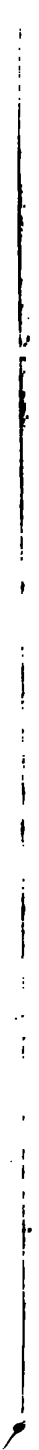
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# IONA:

ITS HISTORY, ANTIQUITIES, ETC.,

BY THE

REV. ARCHIBALD MACMILLAN,  
MINISTER OF IONA.

ITS CARVED STONES,

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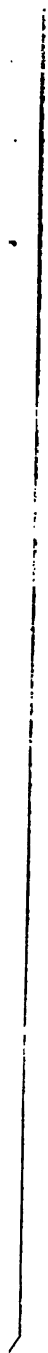
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THE following notes are chiefly intended for visitors to the island, and are meant to supply what has often been enquired for, namely—a concise and reliable history and description of the ruins, with drawings and descriptions of a selection of the carved stones. The material is so arranged that, while giving a condensed history of the place, it will also serve the purpose of an ordinary handbook, rendering the personal attendance of a guide unnecessary.





## INTRODUCTION.

ADAMNAN tells us that on the last day of his life Columba ascended the little hill overlooking his monastery and blessed it saying, "Unto this place, small and mean though it be, great homage shall yet be paid, not only by the Kings and people of the Scots, but by the rulers of barbarous and distant nations, with their people also." Had a larger vision been vouchsafed to the exile of Erin in his Patmos of the West, his modest prophecy might have been uttered in the words of "him who saw the Apocalypse," "And I saw a new heaven and a new earth, for the first heaven and the first earth were passed away."

A survey, however short, of the mighty revolutions that have from time to time renewed and transformed the face of the earth, during the many centuries that separate us from Columba's day, is altogether outside the scope of an ordinary guide-book. To indicate briefly the outstanding features in Columba's life, and arrange in an intelligible form the several landmarks that, at long intervals, divide his age from our's is all that can be attempted.

St. Columba was born on the 7th December, 521, at Gartan, Donegal. His father, Felim MacFergus, was the great-grandson of Niall of the Nine Hostages, and related to the Royal families of Ireland and British Dalriada. His mother, Eithne, was also of royal descent.

His education was intrusted to an aged presbyter named Cruithnechan, who dwelt near the home of

Columba, at a place called Temple-Douglas, between Gartan and Letterkeny. The ruins of a Chapel are still to be seen at this place. Here the son of Felim was baptized *Colum*, a dove, by his foster parent, Cruithnechan. The word *Celle* was early affixed to his baptismal name. The story told in the *Leathar Breac* is that the children of the hamlet used to say among themselves "has our little Colum come to-day from the cell." In this way he received the name of Columcelle, Colum of the Church, or the dove of the Church, now Columba.

When the years of his fosterage under Cruithnechan were ended, he was placed under the care of Finnian or Finbarr, who was the head of a school at Moville. Here he remained for some time and was ordained deacon.

From Moville he proceeded to Leinster where he studied the literature of his native land under Gemman the venerable bard of that province. The incident related by Adamnan occurred during Columba's sojourn at Leinster.<sup>1</sup>

One day when Columba and Gemman were reading together in the fields, a young girl in danger of her life flew towards them for protection. Their united efforts were unable to save her from the savage who sought her life, who murdered her before their eyes. The aged bard, in great grief, turning to Columba said, "How long, oh, how long will God, the true Judge, allow this horrid crime, and this insult, to us to go unpunished?" When Columba replied, "At the very instant the soul of the girl whom he hath murdered ascendeth into Heaven, shall the soul of the murderer go down into hell." No sooner had the words been spoken than the murderer fell at their feet dead.

From the care of Gemman, Columba passed on to the famous school of Finnian at Clonrad, from thence to the monastic school of St. Mobhi at Glasnaoidhen, near

(1) Adam., Book I., Chap. 30, 32.

Dublin. After the death of Mobhi, he founded the Church of Derry in 546, and in 553 the Monastery of Durrow, called by Adamnan Dairnag, Oakfield.

The valuable relic called the Book of Durrow is thought by some to reach back to near this time. The inscription on the shrine of this book associates it with the name of Columba as early as the end of the ninth century.

Dr. Reeves says that "it approaches, if it does not reach, the age of St. Columba." Dr. Petrie is more pronounced in his opinion. "Whatever doubt may be felt as to the exact age of the Book of Kells, no doubt whatever can be entertained as to the age of the Book of Durrow, the writing of which is ascribed to St. Columba." This beautiful MS., now preserved in Trinity College, Dublin, is a copy of the Gospels, written on vellum, in the vernacular of the time. The ornamentation on the pages preceding each of the Gospels is the early Celtic trumpet and diagonal pattern, blended with the interlaced bands, etc., of a later style. A sculptured cross called St. Columkille's Cross, of the same type as St. Martin's, Iona, stands in the Churchyard of Durrow.

Next to Durrow, Kells was the most famous of St. Columba's Irish Monasteries. In the beginning of the ninth century Cellach, Abbot of Iona, founded a new church at Kells, which afterwards became the chief monastery of his order.

Like Durrow, Kells has given its name to an ancient illuminated MS. of the four Gospels. The Book of Kells, called in the annals of the Four Masters the Great Gospel of Columcille, is now in Trinity College, Dublin. Authorities differ as to its date.

Miss Stokes, for reasons that cannot be discussed here, remarks, "the belief that the Book of Kells was the work of Columba himself cannot be sustained."

Whatever date is assigned to this beautiful relic of

Celtic art, "it is," says Professor Westwood, "the most elaborately executed MS. of early art now in existence."

In the Churchyard at Kells there are three sculptured crosses. One of eleven panels dedicated to Patrick and Columba.

A number of other churches were founded by Columba in Ireland between 544 and 562.

O'Donnell, in his collection of facts and fictions which he has woven into a life of the Saint, connects his departure from Ireland with the battle of Cuilremhue, fought in 561. His story is that Columba transcribed for his own use a MS. of the Book of Psalms, belonging to his old master, Finnian of Moville. The owner of the MS. demanded the copy. The demand was refused and Finnian appealed to Diarmaid, Chief of the Southern Hy Neill, King of Ireland, to pronounce judgment. The king's judgment in this case of copyright was given in the following sentence.

*Le gach bo a boinenn agus le gach leabhar a leabhran—* to every cow belongs her calf, and to every book its copy.

Columba was so enraged at this decision that he incited the Northern Hy Neill to avenge in battle the insult offered to their kinsman. Diarmaid was defeated, and Columba was charged before a great assembly convened for the purpose with being the cause of so much slaughter. This assembly decided that he must convert from paganism as many souls as he had caused to be slain. Laisren of Inishmurry was appointed to prescribe the mode in which the sentence of the court was to be carried out. Laisren pronounced sentence of perpetual exile.

Little reliance may be placed on O'Donnell's narrative in this particular. The old Celtic church was essentially a missionary church. Its members did not regard their work among the heathen as either penance or punishment. The existence of this legend seems to indicate that the

enthusiasm for mission work had considerably cooled down in O'Donnell's day.

Columba's exile was not perpetual. Adamnan tells us that he visited Ireland on ten different occasions. There is no reference, direct or indirect, to show that Columba was breaking any law, or running any risk in visiting his native land.

Like the Apostle of the Gentiles during his first imprisonment at Rome, he kept himself in touch with all the churches he had founded, and visited them from time to time. We find him at Meath, Tipperary, and Rathlin.<sup>1</sup>

The real cause of his departure from Ireland was, no doubt, that recorded by his biographer, "St. Columba, resolving to seek a foreign country for the love of Christ, sailed from Scotia to Britain."<sup>2</sup>

In 563 St. Columba left Ireland in his boat of hides, accompanied by twelve followers. After visiting his relative, Conal, King of the Dalriadic Scots, who had some years before migrated from Ireland to Kintyre, he sailed for the little island that has been called by his name for thirteen hundred years, and landed at Port-a-Curach—Port of the Curach—on the 12th May, in the 42nd year of his age.

There is a tradition that he first landed at Oronsay, but on discovering that his fatherland was still in sight he could not remain; there is a cairn called *Carn cul-ri Eirin* (the hill of turning the back to Ireland) on the top of the hill overlooking the ruins of Oronsay Priory.

A small cairn on the top of the highest hill west of Port-a-Curach, also called *Carn cul-ri Eirin*, is said to mark the spot from which Columba scanned the southern horizon when he first landed on Iona. Satisfied that the green hills of Erin were no longer in sight, he buried his curach near the beach where its keel first touched the

(1) Adam., Book II., Chap. 42, etc.

(2) Adam., Second Preface.

shore, and took peaceful possession of the land that has since that day really been his own.

It requires some effort of the imagination to reconstruct the epoch to which Columba's mission takes us back.

Although the trumpet of the Goth had sounded within the walls of Rome more than a hundred years before his birth, the Empire was still standing.

Justinian was Emperor, and Belisarius, the first great Christian warrior, commanded the small army that guarded the mother city of the Pagan world. The memorials of the old heathen worship and cruelty were still standing. The Temple of Jupiter, plundered of its treasure, but entire, looked down from the heights of the Capitol on the Flavian Amphitheatre where men still fought with wild beasts.

All Europe was in a state of mighty upheaval and unrest. The rudiments of what are now the great nations of the earth were not then discernible. The "strong wild man" who gave his name to the creed of 200,000,000 beings was not yet born. Columba had reached the age of threescore and ten years before Gregory was elected Pope. Looking nearer home, we find what is now called Scotland divided into several small principalities of Scots, Northern and Southern Picts, Britons of Strathclyde, Picts of Galloway, etc. The territory of the Britons of Strathclyde extended from Dumbarton to an undefined boundary beyond the Solway Frith. The Grampians, extending from Argyle on the west to Kincardine on the east, divided the Northern from the Southern Picts.

In the interval between the death of St. Patrick in 458 and the coming of St. Columba in 563 a colony of Scots from Dalriada, in Ulster, landed in Kintyre, and gradually extended the boundaries of their original possessions as far as the Island of Mull. If the old chronicles are to be trusted, the three sons of Erc, King of the Dalriadic Scots, were buried in Iona.

The Scots of Argyle were a Christian people, and if Iona was included in their possession, as it seems to have been, the first rays of early light must have whitened its shores before the dawn of Columba's day. Traces of an earlier settlement than his are to be found in the Litany of Angus the Culdee. He speaks of the "seven Bishops of Hii" and the "seven bishops of the church of 'Ia." Oran of Latteragh, in Tipperary, of the same race as the Christian Scots of Argyle, gave his name to the sepulchre of the kings buried in Iona, Reilig Oran—to the old churchyard in the island of Colonsay—and to a district in the North-west of Mull, Tioran, the land of Oran. He died fifteen years before Columba came to Scotland.

The Southern Picts and the Britons of Strathclyde, had lapsed sadly since the days of Ninian and Patrick. The Northern Picts, who possessed the whole of Scotland north of the Grampians, were uncivilised heathens.

There is some reason for believing that this nation had, to some extent, been the cause of Columba's departure from Ireland. In 560, Brude, King of the Northern Picts defeated in battle the Scots of Argyle. The King of Dalriada was slain. The defeat of his Christian countrymen, at the hands of a pagan nation, and the death of his kinsman, the King of Scots, may have influenced Columba in selecting North Pictland as his first mission field. If he could convert this powerful and turbulent nation to Christianity, a better feeling would arise between them and their neighbours; their wars would cease, and those with whom he naturally sympathised in the day of their distress would be allowed to possess their land in peace.

He had resolved, we are told, to seek a foreign land for the love of Christ, and these circumstances may have induced him to fix his heart on the conversion of the pagan nation that threatened the extinction of the only Christian colony in Albyn.

A prophecy in the chronicle of the Picts and Scots gives



the defeat of the Dalriada as a cause of his leaving Ireland.

In any case the world was all before him, "where to choose," and his choice fell on North Pictland, then as now, the wildest and most inaccessible part of Scotland.

Before entering on active missionary work, Columba's first care would be to erect the buildings common to the monastic system of the time, and make the necessary provision for the protection and sustenance of the new establishment.

The monastic buildings erected by Columba in Iona would naturally have the same arrangement and design as those with which he had been familiar in Ireland. From Adamnan's references we learn that in his time the monastery consisted of a church with sacristy adjoining, a refectory, and near it the kitchen. The huts of the brethren were separate from each other and arranged round a green or court. The abbot's hut, built of joists, stood by itself at a little distance from the rest. Strangers had a lodging set apart for themselves.

The buildings were "small and mean,"<sup>1</sup> a mere collection of mud and wattle-huts. The space which they occupied was enclosed by a rath or vallum, *i.e.*, a broad rampart of earth and stones, defended on the outside by a ditch or trench. Near the rath, but outside, was the cowhouse, barn, kiln. Adamnan says nothing about a mill, but he mentions the grinding of corn.<sup>2</sup> The pasture land was on the east side of the island, the arable on the west. The community had a fleet of boats large and small. Some were planked, others were made of skin fastened to ribs of wood. Each of the brethren had his own special work, and all were subject to the abbot. When all was finished, Columba was ready to deliver his message to the heathen.

(1) Adam., Bk. III., Chap. 24.

(2) Bk. I., Chap. 22.

One indication of what that message was may be gathered from an incident related by Adamnan. "At the time when St. Columba was tarrying for some days in the province of the Picts; a certain peasant, who, with his whole family, had listened to, and learned through an interpreter, the word of life preached by the holy man, believed and was baptised—the husband together with his wife, children and domestics."

A few days afterwards one of the sons of the family was suddenly taken ill and died. "Columba entered by himself into the house of mourning, when falling on his knees, he prayed to Christ our Lord, having his face bedewed with copious tears. Then rising from his kneeling posture he turned his eyes towards the deceased and said 'In the name of the Lord Jesus Christ arise and stand upon thy feet.' At the sound of this glorious word from the saint, the soul returned to the body and the person that was dead opened his eyes and revived."<sup>1</sup>

How long Columba was in Iona before entering on active missionary work, in his own immediate neighbourhood, is not accurately known. Two years after his arrival, accompanied by his old companions, Comgall and Cainnich, he set out for the residence of the Pictish king, near the town of Inverness. King Brude at first refused to admit the missionaries within his gates, but ultimately the bolts and bars yielded to the prayers of Columba, and the King himself became the first convert of his nation.

Columba laboured for a number of years among the Picts who, before he left them, had all been converted to Christianity. During the last year of his sojourn in Pictland, Comall, king of Dalriada died. Adian, son of Gabran, who was slain in battle, by Brude, in 560, was selected by Columba to succeed his cousin Conall.

In 574, Columba crowned Adian, king of Scots. The

(1) Adam., Bk. II., Chap. 23.

ceremony took place in Iona, and tradition says that the "stone of destiny" on which Adian sat, forms part of the coronation chair on which the kings of England and Scotland are crowned. If that is so Queen Victoria and Adian were crowned on the same chair. Adian was the first of that long line of Scottish kings who gave England James the I. and Scotland James the VI. This sovereign, by hereditary right, succeeded to the throne of both kingdoms. Her Majesty's rights, as Queen of Scotland, are derived from the old Celtic Scottish kings, of whose race Columba was, and whose blood still rules the land. He was the founder of the Scottish church. From his hands the Scottish nation received its first king.

It is an interesting fact that when the representatives of the National Church assembled in Iona, on the 9th of June, 1897, to commemorate the thirteen hundredth anniversary of Columba's death, British subjects all over the world were preparing to celebrate the long and glorious reign of Adian's successor.

By the conversion of the Northern Picts, and the recognition of Adian as an independent king by the Dalriada of Ireland, at the Convention of Drumceatt, in 575, Columba had succeeded in accomplishing part of the work on which he set his heart.

Scottish Dalriada was now free to shape her own destiny; the Picts were converted, and not likely, in his day, to carry on war against their neighbours. From the few details supplied by his biographer, Columba seems at some time or other to have traversed all the country North of the Forth and Clyde. When North and South Pictland became united under one king, he extended his operations towards the South. All the places he visited and churches he founded are too numerous to mention here.

He is said to have visited Buchan, Aberlour, Deer, Abernethy, the mainland of Argyle, and some of the islands near at hand. Adamnan tells us he visited Eilean Na

Naomh, an island of the Garveloch group, between Mull and Lorne. There he was directed in a vision to crown Adian king. During his life time his disciples founded churches in Lismore, Lorne, Morven, Mull, Bute, Egg, and many others in the islands and on the mainland. How long before his death Columba ceased his journeyings by land and sea is difficult to tell. Constant exposure to all weathers in a climate proverbial for "vapours, clouds, and storms;" long, weary journeys through a wild country that could only be traversed on foot, "in perils of waters, in perils of robbers, in perils by the heathen, in perils in the wilderness, in perils in the sea, in weariness and painfulness, in watchings, often in hunger and thirst, in fastings, often in cold and nakedness, besides those things which are without the care of all the churches."<sup>1</sup> These hardships and anxieties of life fall to the lot of the pioneer in all ages. The body is worn out long before the mental vision has grown dim. This seems to have happened in St. Columba's case. From the accounts that have come down to us he was evidently a tall, strong-boned, active Celt, whose length of days, in ordinary circumstances, would not be "labour and sorrow," even at eighty. In the island where he lived and died the present generation of men, now passing away, are not worn out at eighty. Even at ninety they are not frail. Columba had borne the burden and heat of the day. He felt his frailty before he knew "the end and measure of his days." "On this very day, thirty years of my sojourn in Britain have been completed, and meanwhile, for many days past, I have been devoutly asking of my Lord to release me from my dwelling here at the end of this thirtieth year and call me thither to my heavenly fatherland."<sup>2</sup> . . . "Though it is against this ardent wish four years from this day are added for me to abide in the flesh."<sup>3</sup> In the month of May, when the four years

(1) 2 Corinth. xi. 26.

(2), (3) Adam., Bk. III., Chap. 23.

were nearly ended, he was too feeble to walk the short distance between his monastery and the field where the brethren were at work. "The old man, worn out with age, went in a cart, one day, in the month of May . . . to visit some of the brethren who were at work."<sup>1</sup> A short time afterwards he took his last leave of the old familiar places. He first visited the barn and blessed the small store of last year's grain. Returning to his monastery he rested half way at a place where a cross, which was afterwards erected, and is standing to this day, fixed in a mill stone, may be observed on the roadside.<sup>2</sup> He then ascended the "*little hill*" overlooking his monastery, and, lifting up his hands, blessed it. Saying, "Small and mean though this place is, yet it shall be held in great and unusual honour, not only by Scotie kings and people, but also by the rulers of foreign and barbarous nations and by their subjects; thy saints, also of other churches, shall regard it with no common reverence."<sup>3</sup> Returning to his hut he resumed his work on the psalter, but when he had transcribed as far as verse ten of psalm xxxiv., "They that seek the Lord shall not want any good thing," he said to his servant Diarmaid, "here at the foot of this page I must stop, let Baithen finish the rest." Resting on his bed he gave Diarmaid his last message to the brethren. When the midnight bell tolled "he arose hastily and went to the church." Diarmaid followed, and "cried out in a mournful voice, 'Where art thou father?'" There was no answer. "Feeling his way in the darkness he found the saint lying before the altar." By this time the brethren had assembled with their lights, and before the sun rose above the mountains of Drumalbann on the 9th June, 597, Colum of the church was dead. When the days of their mourning were ended the brethren buried him according to the simple manner of the time, "and no man knoweth of his sepulchre unto this day."

(1), (2), (3) Adam., Bk. III., Chap. 24.

As Columba himself had appointed his successor, there could be no contention.

*Baithene*, one of the twelve who accompanied him to Iona, accordingly became second abbot of Hy. He was first cousin to the Saint, and, during the life time of Columba, presided over the monastery in the island of Tiree. He died on the 9th June, two years after his master had passed away.

*Laisren* the son of Feradach, of the tribe of Columba, succeeded him. He was head of the Monastery of Durrow at Columba's death. He died in 605.

*Ferna-Bret*, called by Adamnan Virgnons, now became abbot. He was evidently educated in Iona, and was a young man in the days of Columba.<sup>1</sup> Ferna-Bret died in 623, and

*Segine*, nephew of the third abbot, ruled in his stead. During the time of his abbacy, Oswald, second son of Aidilfrid, king of Northumbria, recovered from the heathen the kingdom lost during his father's reign. In his youth Oswald had visited Iona, and as Bede tells us, "received part of his education there." "When in banishment received the sacraments of baptism among the seniors of the Scots."<sup>2</sup> On regaining his kingdom, Oswald's first care was the re-establishment of the Christian Church, that had been destroyed by the heathen. To aid him in this work he asked the "Seniors of the Scots" to send him a bishop, "by whose instruction and ministry the Anglic nations which he governed might be taught the advantages of faith in the Lord, and receive its sacraments."<sup>3</sup> The "Seniors" granted Oswald's request, and sent Aidan from Iona, who, after the manner of his tribe and nation, built his church on the island of Lindisfarne, near the coast of Northumbria, and thus established among the heathen Angliks the Celtic Christianity of Columba.

(1) Adam., Bk. III., Chap. 20.

(2) Bede, H.E., Bk. III., Chap. 4.

(3) " " " " 5.

Great numbers of Scotch missionaries followed their countryman to his new home. They preached, baptized, built churches, instructed the young, and brought in this way the "benefits of knowledge," and the "blessings of religion" to the savage clans and roving barbarians who dwelt in heathen Northumbria. "Not Augustine but Aidan," says Bishop Lightfoot, "was the true apostle of England." Montalembert in his work, "The monks of the West," says: "From the cloisters of Lindisfarne, Northumbrian Christianity spread over the southern kingdom . . . the influence of the Celtic missionaries reaching districts which their (Roman) predecessor had never been able to enter. After Aidan's death Finan from Iona was appointed his successor.

*Suibhne*, son of Currthu, was abbot for five years. Died in 657.

*Cuimine Ailbhi*, surnamed Fionn or Albics the fair, was seventh abbot. He wrote a book on the virtues of Columba, which Adamnan has incorporated with his own life of the Saint. He died in 669, seventy-two years after the death of Columba, and was succeeded by

*Failbhe*, son of Pipan.

The principal event during his tenure of the abbacy was the extension of the Church along the west coast of Rosshire and Argyle.

*Adamnan*, ninth abbot of Iona, whose name is inseparably bound up with that of Columba, was born in 624—twenty-seven years after the death of his patron. His father, Ronan, was related to Columba and the royal rulers of Ireland. The controversy between the Roman and the Celtic Church regarding the proper time for observing Easter, which commenced in the time of Laisren the third abbot, was renewed by Adamnan. He visited Northumbria twenty-four years after the Synod of Whitby had renounced the custom of the church which Aidan had

(1) Bede, H.E., Bk. III., Chap. 3.

founded there, and decided to follow the Roman mode of observing Easter. During his stay in the country of the Angles, Bede tells us that Adamnan was "admonished by many who were more learned than himself not to presume to live contrary to the universal custom of the church in relation to either the observance of Easter or any other decrees whatsoever, considering the small number of his followers seated at so distant a corner of the world." <sup>1</sup>

This admonition seems to have had the desired effect, for on his return to Iona he tried hard either to convince or compel the brethren to conform to the Roman custom in everything, as he had done himself. His zeal for the new order of things created a schism in the Columban Church, and caused discord among brethren who had always dwelt together in unity.

The feeling against Adamnan's innovations must have been deep and strong when neither the dignity of his office, nor his descent from the tribe of Columba, nor the obedience which they owed him as their superior, could induce the "Family of Iona" to recognise his authority in changing a custom sanctioned by the example of Columba.

He attended the Synod held at Tara in 692. In 697 he again visited Ireland, and, according to some authorities, wrote his "Life of Columba" in the interval. On his return to Iona after a stay of seven years in Ireland, he made another attempt to convert the disciples of Columba to the Roman customs, "without being able to prevail." <sup>2</sup> He died on 23rd September, 704, leaving to his successor the heavy burden of a schismatic church.

After Adamnan's death, the Easter controversy seems to have been renewed with considerable vigour among the "Family of Iona." It is difficult to find any other reason for the want of unanimity that prevailed among them. The custom of the Church had all along been to choose the

(1), (2) Bede, H.E., Bk. V., Chap. 15.



abbot from the tribe of the founder, but evidently the Roman party had now grown strong enough to set aside the Columban custom, and accordingly that party appointed

*Connhall—the first Abbot not of Columba's Tribe.* During his abbacy, the Columban party appointed Duncadh, who was of the founder's tribe. Connhall died in 710. After his death, Ceode, called Bishop of Iona, and Dorbehi held the abbacy in succession. The first died in 712 and the last in 713. Duncadh who, as we have seen, was in office during the lifetime of Connhall, then became sole abbot. Duncadh himself, and those who thought with him, conformed in 716, and the Columban party elected

*Faelcu*, who was descended from the tribe of the founder. When Connhall was abbot ten years before, Naiton, king of the Picts, adopted the new views, and on the death of Duncadh in 717, expelled from his dominions all the Columban monks who refused to conform. This persecution broke up the Church among the Picts, and drove the monks to seek refuge among their kin in Ireland, Dalriada, and Iona. In the latter place their number would strengthen the opposition to the Roman party, and the schism would go on.

In 722 Feidhlimidh and Faelcu held the abbacy at the same time.

*Cillene Fada* succeeded Faelcu in 724, Cilline Droichteach in 716. Feidhlimidh was still living when

*Cilline Droichteach, bridge-maker*, became abbot. He was the first anchorite abbot of Iona, and died in 752.

*Slebhine* succeeded to the abbacy in 752, and when he died in 767,

*Suibhne* became sole abbot of Iona.

Both abbots visited the Columban monasteries in Ireland within a few years of each other. Their visit was,

no doubt, in connection with the schism that still existed at home. After the death of Suibhne in 772,

*Breasal* became abbot, and the conformity of the "Family of Iona" to the Roman order ended the schism in the old monastery of Columba.

Peace having been restored within, a new danger threatened the brethren from without. In 795 the Danes made their first descent on Iona. Again in 798 "they plundered the islands of the sea between Erin and Alban." In 801 *Breasal* died, after having held the abbacy for thirty-one years.

*Connachtach*, 801-802.

Monastery of Iona burnt by the Danes.

*Cellach*, 802-814.

The community of Iona, numbering sixty-eight, slain by the Danes, *Cellach* builds a new stone monastery at Kells. Between 802 and 807, remains of Columba said to have been enshrined and taken to Ireland.

*Diarmaid*, 814-831.

*Diarmaid* returned to Iona with the shrine of Columba in 818. During his absence in Ireland the wooden monastery had probably been replaced by one of stone. Decline of Iona as the head of the Columban order. In 825 the Danes again plundered Iona. Shrine of Columba concealed in the earth and covered with sods. *Blathmac*, the superior, refused to disclose the place and was slain by the Danes—829. *Diarmaid*, who was absent during this plundering, returned to Iona with (*Mionna*) crozier, books, etc., of Columba.

Probably a small oratory built over the spot where the shrine was concealed.

*Innrechtach*, 831-854.

Went to Ireland in 849 with *Mionna* of Columba. Slain by the Saxons on his way to Rome. *Kenneth M'Alpine*, a Scot, became king of the Picts. The Columban monks brought back by *Kenneth* to the

country from which they had been expelled by Naiton, king of the Picts, in 710. Kenneth founds the Church of Dunkeld, which took the place of Iona among the Columban monasteries. Part of Columba's relics are said to have been transferred to Dunkeld.

*Cellach*, 854-865.

Abbot of Iona and Kildare. Driven by the Danes to seek refuge among the Picts. Died probably at Abernethy, to which the primacy was now transferred. The round tower there is of the same type as that of Kildare. Both of Celtic workmanship.

*Feradach*, 865-880.

Norwegian Vikings threaten the Western Isles. Shrine and Mionna of Columba removed to Ireland.

*Flann*, 880-881.

The term Scottish Church first used.

*Maelbrighde*, 891-927, abbot of Armagh and Iona.

Shrine of Columba brought back to Iona.

Primacy transferred from Abernethy to St. Andrews. In 908 kings of the Picts now first called kings of Alban. About this period, during the struggle between the Danes and Norwegians for the possession of the Western Isles, Iona was burnt by the Danes of Limerick on Christmas eve, 986, and eleven of the clergy slain. The shrine of Columba removed from Iona to Down. A year or two afterwards the Isles passed into the hands of the Norwegians. In 1005 Malcolm II. began his reign over Alban, now for the first time called Scotland. In 1027 Dunkeld destroyed by fire.

Two years after the Norman Conquest of England in 1066, the royal family of the Saxon line fled to Scotland and took refuge at the court of Malcolm Canmore, son of Malcolm the second, and great-grandson of Ciran, lay abbot of Dunkeld. In 1069 Malcolm married Margaret, sister of Edgar Atheling, the heir of the Saxon line. Margaret was a devoted adherent of the Roman Church, in

which she had been reared, and when she became Queen of Scotland her attention was naturally directed to the condition of the Christian Church in the land of her adoption. That Church, as we have seen, had passed through various changes and suffered many things since its establishment by Columba in 563.

At the council of Whitby it received its first check from the Roman mission established at Canterbury, and Colman of Lindisfarne, the successor of Aidan, returned to Iona.

Adamnan had failed in his attempt to change the custom of the Columban Church, and when his successor was appointed a schism arose among the "Family of Iona," which continued to the time of Abbot Bressal. Fifty-five years before this, the Pictish king expelled the Columban monks from his kingdom because they would not depart from the custom of their fathers. They were restored to their possessions by Kenneth M'Alpine, who founded the Church of Dunkeld, and appointed an abbot of Dunkeld head of the Church among the Picts. When the kings of the Picts began to be called kings of Alban, the tribal bishops in the Columban Church among the Picts were designated bishops of Alban. In 908 the primacy was transferred to St. Andrews, and Cellach became first bishop of Alban. Fothad, who died in 1093, was the last. With his death the succession in the old Celtic Church came to an end after lasting for 185 years. From the coming of Columba to the death of Malcolm Canmore, Scotland had a National Church. "Wholly unlike any Church now existing in the world, that which came to be gradually substituted for it during many centuries was merely one branch of the great Latin community which occupied the whole of Western Europe." It was neither Roman nor Saxon, but Celtic. It was in no way subject to Rome; many of its clergy were married men. Hereditary succession in

(1) Duke of Argyle.

benefices was common in Scotland and Ireland. It was monastic not diocesan. The source of jurisdiction was vested in the abbot. The language spoken by the first and last missionaries of the old National Church of Scotland was the language of Malcolm Canmore and his court. It survived the four conquests of England, and in it the Gospel is preached to this day in the island where Columba lived and died. When St. Margaret discovered that the Celtic Church differed in many practices from her own, "she contended against the supporters of these strange customs, while her royal husband, who was equally well acquainted with the Anglic language and with his native Gaelic, acted as interpreter."<sup>1</sup>

Her biographer further informs us that she persuaded the council to condemn and drive out of the kingdom all practice escontrary to the rule of faith.<sup>2</sup>

The changes she introduced removed any lingering customs of the old Columban Church which still survived. When the Western Isles fell into the hands of Malcolm in 1074, she restored the monastery of Iona, which had been allowed to decay during the long struggle between Danes and Norwegians.

In 1093 the Western Isles were handed over by the Scottish king to Magnus Barefoot, king of Norway, and in November of the same year, Malcolm, the last of the old dynasty of Celtic kings was slain at Alnwick. St. Margaret did not survive the news of her husband's death, who was succeeded by his son Edgar. In this year also the last native bishop of Alban died, and six years after Dunnchad Mac Mic Maonach (the son of the monk's son), the last of the old abbots of Iona. Although the Roman Church was dominant in Scotland at the death of St. Margaret, her son Edgar made no attempt to carry out the policy of his mother in subjecting the Scottish Church to Roman rule. After the death of Edgar, the kingdom was divided

(1), (2) *Life of St. Marg.*, Chap. 8.

between Alexander, who succeeded him, and Earl David, his brother. When Alexander ascended the throne, he appointed Turgot, prior of Durham, bishop of St. Andrews. The work of superseding the monastic organisation of the old Celtic Church was now begun by introducing the diocesan system, which was in good working order before the death of David the first. Alexander created the bishoprics of Moray and Dunkeld. He introduced canons regular of St. Augustine, and placed them at Scone, Dunkeld, and Inchcolm. What Alexander was doing in one part of Scotland, his brother David was doing in another. A monastery of Benedictines was founded by David at Selkirk. He restored and founded several abbeys—Jedburgh, Melrose, and Newbattle. He founded the diocese of Ross, Caithness, Aberdeen, Dunblane, etc. David's successors, Malcolm IV. and William the Lion, introduced Cistercians at Cupar-Angus, and Benedictines at Arbroath. Under the shadow of this system, the old Columban Church, represented by the oppressed and persecuted Culdees, gradually withered away.

From the death of Maelbrighde in 927 to the death of Domhall, abbot of Kells, in 1098, sixteen *coarbs*<sup>1</sup> of Columkille had lived and died. This interval has been passed over as there is almost nothing to record except the death or succession of an abbot.

*Domhnall*, abbot of Kells and *coarb* of Columkille, 1062-1098.

His abbacy forms a kind of connecting link between the Columban foundations on the mainland of Scotland which came to an end in King David's reign, and the mother Church in the island of which he was abbot. During his lifetime great changes had taken place. The Western Isles had been ceded to Malcolm by the king of Norway. Five years before his death they passed again into the hands of the Norwegians. He was alive six years

(1) Heirs.

before Queen Margaret came to Scotland. He was still living five years after she died. He outlived by five years the last native bishop of Alban. A year before his death Magnus, king of Norway, visited Iona, "and opened the smaller Church of Kollum Kille, but did not go in. He immediately locked the door, and said that no man should be so bold as to go in there, and that Church has never been opened since."

After this visit of Magnus, the history of Iona is a blank for well over half a century. During that long silent period the Isle of Columba seems to have been isolated both from Ireland and Scotland. There is no Adamnan to tell us what was taking place. Galleys manned by strange, fierce men would come as of old to lay the dead of their race in the sepulchre of the kings. Others filled with armed warriors would also come on their old errands of plunder, as they had done centuries before.

Towards the end of this period, when the light becomes clearer, we find that Godred, the Norwegian king of the isles, and Somerled, the Celtic ruler of Argyle, had divided the Isles between them.

Somerled had married the granddaughter of Magnus, the Norwegian king, and her son, Dubghal, with the assistance of his father and Thorfinn, a Norwegian chief, was made king of the Isles. This usurpation led to a war between Somerled and Godred, king of Norway. A battle was fought in 1156, and, as neither side could claim the victory, the leaders agreed to divide the land between them. All the isles south of Ardnamurchan fell to Somerled, and Iona, as in the days of Adian, king of Dalriada, again became the possession of a Celtic race.

Two years before this division took place, while the Isles were still subject to Norway, Pope Anastasius IV. erected the metropolitan see of Tronthem, and the Sudreys, that is the isles south of Ardnamurchan, were annexed to

the new province, and included in the bishopric of Man. The see is spoken of as Sodor and Man.

The monastery of Iona was at this time without an abbot. The right to elect one was vested in the *sacart mor*, or great priest, *Ferleighin*, or lector, the *Desertach*, head of the hermitage, and the *Cele De*, head of the Culdees.<sup>1</sup>

Some years after Somerled had acquired the Isles, he and the chief men of the Isles offered the abbacy of Iona to Flaithbertach O'Brolchan, bishop of Derry, and coarb, or heir of Columkille, but the abbot of Armagh, the king of Ireland, and the chiefs of Cinel Eoghan prevented it. This took place in 1164, and a year or two afterwards Somerled was slain.

There was, therefore, no abbacy when Reginald, son of Somerled, succeeded his father in the lordship of the Isles. Iona was in possession of the Culdees, and evidently Donald O'Brolchan, who died in 1202, was head of the order.

The work of substituting monks of the Roman order for those of the old Church, had, as we have seen, been quite successful on the mainland of Scotland. What Alexander I., David, Malcolm IV., and William the Lyon had done within their kingdom, Reginald now did in his.

During the reign of William the Lyon he founded a monastery of benedictines in Iona, with Clestinus as first abbot. The deed of confirmation by the Pope is dated 1203. No doubt the benedictine abbot had full power granted him from his civil and ecclesiastical superiors to carry out the policy which he immediately adopted towards the remnant of the old Celtic community. In other parts of Scotland we know that the prelate had full power to oppress the Culdees and seize their property. David I., in 1144, signed a charter which reads as under, "Be it known to you that I have granted and given to the canons of St

(1) Skene, *Celtic Scotland*, Vol. II., p. 414.



Andrews the Island of Lochleven, that they may institute there an order of canons ; and the Culdees who are found there, if they wish to live according to rule, may remain in peace with them and under them, but if any of them choose to resist, I wish and command that he be expelled from the island." Whether Clestinus had a similar mandate from Reginald or not, his first act of aggression was to drive out the old community.

The last mention of Iona in the Irish annals makes this clear. A monastery was erected by Cellach (Clestinus) without any legal right, "and in despite of the 'Family of Hy,' in the middle of Cro-Hy, and did considerable damage to the town. The clergy of the north assembled together to pass over into Hy, namely Florcance O' Carolan, bishop of Tyrone ; Maelisa O'Derry, bishop of Tirconnel and abbot of the Abbey Church of Paul and Peter at Armagh ; Awley O'Ferghail, abbot of the Abbey Church of Derry ; with Ainmire O'Coffey, many of the family of Derry, and a great number of the northern clergy beside. They passed over into Hy, and, in accordance with the law of the Church, they subsequently pulled down the monastery, and the aforesaid Awley was elected abbot of Hy by the suffrages of Foreigners and Gaeidhel."

## NOTES ON THE ANTIQUITIES.

THE death of Reginald, founder of the Benedictine Monastery, is recorded by MacVurich in the book of Clan Ranald as follows: That having obtained a cross from Jerusalem and having received the body of Christ, and extreme unction, he died and was buried in Relig Oran, Iona, in A.D., 1207 (see page 64). From this date, during the long period of three hundred and eighty-seven years, there is little known of the history of Iona. A reference in a clan record to a burial: a deed of conveyance from an old charter-chest bearing the abbot's seal; or a State paper granting the king's protection to a prioress, and sometimes an allusion in an old Gaelic poem, to the robbers who came to rob and not to pray, are the only indications that the monastery of monks and nuns founded by the son of Somerled still continued to exist. After the Benedictines had established themselves at Iona, until 1560 the "luminary of the Caledonian regions was in 'dim eclipse,' and 'shed disastrous twilight' on roving clans and savage barbarians." In the interval between the Reformation and the Revolution settlement in 1690, very little attention was paid to the condition of ecclesiastical edifices in England or Scotland. In the case of the "ruins of Iona" there is no proof that any systematic attempt was ever made to destroy the buildings by those whose religious opinions differed from the system that had been dominant

for so many centuries. Freeman's remarks about the Goths and Vandals can easily be applied to the history of the ecclesiastical buildings in Iona and elsewhere with a great deal of truth. "It is needless at this time of day to refute once more the ancient slander which laid the destruction of the monuments of Pagan Rome to the charge of Goths and Vandals . . . it was mainly at the hands of her own children, from the first Christian Emperor who built a church to the last Pope's nephew who built a palace that the work of the men of old crumbled away."<sup>1</sup>

There is substantial evidence to prove that the monastic buildings in Iona were destroyed by the adherents of the religious system which they represent. There is a poem in "The Book of the Dean of Lismore" beginning as follows :

"The one demon of the Gael is dead,  
A tale 'tis well to remember,  
Fierce ravager of church and cross  
The bald-head, heavy, worthless boar.

Mac Ruarie from the ocean far,  
Wealth thou'st got without an effort.  
'Tis a report we can't neglect,  
For with Columba I must meet,  
'Tis a report that fills the land,  
Bald-head Allan thou so faithless,  
That thou hast, not thine only crime  
Ravaged I and Relig Oran,  
Fiercely didst thou then destroy  
Priest's vestments and vessels for the mass."<sup>2</sup>

The Allan MacRuarie seems to have been the son of Ranald, ancestor of Clan Ranald. This Ranald was the second son of John Lord of the Isles, great-great-grandson of Reginald, the founder of the monastery of monks and nuns destroyed by his relative Allan MacRuarie.

(1) *Quarterly Review*, 1882.

(2) *Dean of Lismore's Book*, page 144.

In a note to this poem Dr. Skene remarks "the reformers had probably less to do with the destruction of the buildings in Iona than is generally thought."<sup>1</sup>

At the Reformation, in 1560, Iona and the lands belonging of old to the monastery, fell into the hands of Lachlan M'Lean of Duart. The Abbey of Iona was annexed to the Bishopric of the Isles in 1617. In 1635 Charles I. wrote Lachlan M'Lean, of Duart, asking him to restore the Island of Icolmkill to the Bishop of the Isles. In the same year he directed the Lords of the Exchequer to pay a grant of £400 to the Bishop of the Isles to repair the Cathedral. When Sacheverell, Governor of Man, visited Iona in 1688, the buildings were in ruins. The money had evidently not been paid, or some other use was found for it. About 1693 Iona came into the possession of the Dukes of Argyle.

#### PORT RONAN (RONAN'S PORT).

Though not the *portus insulae* of Adamnan, Port Ronan has always been the principal harbour of the Island. The names of the little harbours on the east side are all more or less suggestive of the ecclesiastical establishment to which Iona owes all its fame.

Port a Crossain (port of the little cross) is near the middle of the village, near which stood Crois Adhamnain (Adamnan's Cross). Port na Muinntir (the port of the people) is a little farther to the east than the last cottage in the village.

Port an Diseart (port of the hermitage) about a quarter of a mile east of the abbey ruins and near Cladh an Diseart (burial place of the hermitage), where the foundation of a small oratory can be traced.

Port nam Mairtear (martyrs' port), the sandy bay south of the village near the Free Church. Martyr is evidently a

(1) Dean of Lismore's Book, page 144.

corruption of the old Irish word *marta*, the term for the enshrined bones of a saint. We learn from the Irish Annals that enshrining was common during the 8th century. From the same source we also learn that St. Columba's bones were enshrined after they had lain for more than a hundred years in the soil of the island that bears his name and transferred to Ireland. The name *marta* may have been given to the bay from which the *Currach* sailed and to which it returned again in 818 with Dermaid, abbot of Iona, bearing with him the *marta* of Collum kille.

In the olden time the remains of those brought for burial in Iona were landed at this bay, and tradition records that the body was laid on the little sandy mound called *Ella*,<sup>1</sup> near the head of the bay, where all the inhabitants gathered to pour "their wailing o'er the dead."

This custom was observed as late as 1857. Even to this day, when the remains of those who have the right of burial in the Relig Oran are brought by sea, there is an instinctive tendency to follow the old custom and land at Martyrs' bay.

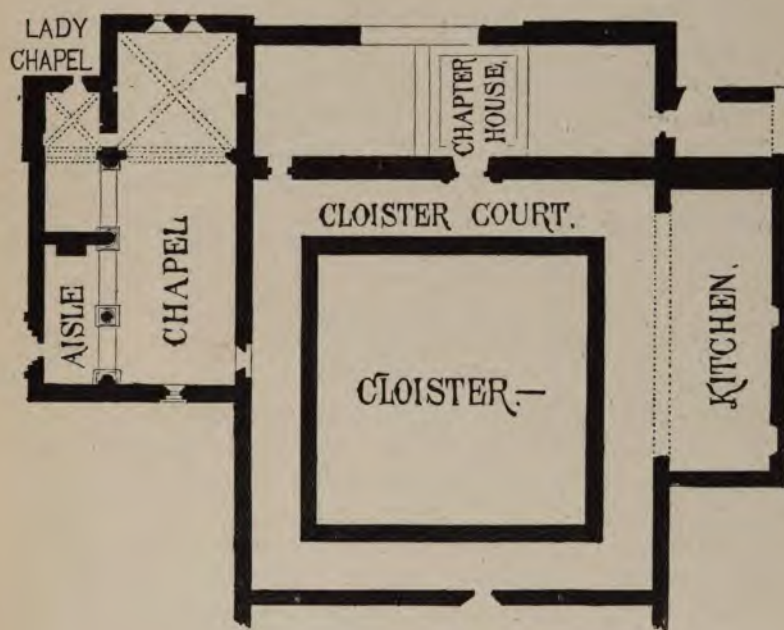
Cladh nan Druidnean (burial place of the Druids) is immediately behind the thatched cottage at the head of this bay.

It is full of human bones. The old enclosure wall, described by Pennant, has long since disappeared, and there is now nothing left to help the stranger in distinguishing the old burial place from the pasture land that surrounds it. Even those natives intimately acquainted with the traditional site are unable accurately to define its area. When following their usual occupation, they have been occasionally reminded of its existence, and, like Virgil's plowman, passed the plow over empty helmets, and wondered at the mighty relics of gigantic bones. There is no record or tradition when it began or ceased to be used as a place of burial.

(1) A bier.

THE NUNNERY.<sup>1</sup>

GAELIC—EAGLAS DHUBH.



NONE of the principal ecclesiastical ruins now standing in Iona belong to the time or system of the primitive Celtic Church. "The early Celtic Church, which gave to Iona all its fame, was, in its organisation, wholly unlike any Church now existing in the world."<sup>2</sup> Canterbury was ignorant of

(1) The plan is from a Drawing by Dr. Rowand Anderson, F.S.A. Scot., etc.

(2) Duke of Argyle.

it, and Rome acknowledged it not. Female monastic institutions formed no part of the system of Columba, nor of his immediate successors.

The record kept from time to time by the Macvurichs, the hereditary historians of the clan Macdonald, informs us that Reginald, son of Somerled, Lord of the Isles, who lived during the reign of William the Lyon, founded in Iona a monastery of black nuns, and that his sister Beatrice was a black nun. From another source we learn<sup>1</sup> that Somerled, father of Reginald, had an only daughter, who was prioress of Icolmkill. This Reginald succeeded to the Lordship of the Isles in 1166, and died in 1207. In this interval the monastery was founded, with Beatrice, sister of Reginald, as first prioress. Bowar, abbot of Inchcolm, who wrote in 1445, says that the nuns were of the order of St. Augustine.

He is not likely to have been mistaken, as, during the time he was abbot of Inchcolm, it was occupied by canons of St. Augustine. If nuns of the same order were in Iona when he wrote he would not likely be ignorant of the fact. Both orders may have occupied Iona at different periods. The Augustine nuns taking the place of the Benedictines when the abbey of Iona became subject to Dunkeld.

The nunnery buildings originally extended beyond the western boundary wall. There is no evidence that they were of greater extent than they are now in any other direction. As nearly as can be ascertained, the ruins may be described as consisting of kitchen, refectory, chapter house, with stone seats, cloister foundations, and chapel with aisle on the north side. The west gable of the chapel is beautifully proportioned, and contains a large round-headed Norman window, deeply splayed on the inside. The arches opening into the aisle are Norman, and are probably of the same period as the three small arches in the north transept of the abbey church. They are of the

(1) Knock MS.

type in use prior to the 12th century, but, as this characteristic of Norman architecture continued longer in Scotland than in England, the probability is that the building is nearer the 13th century than the 12th.

The spaces between the arches have been filled up with solid masonry. This new departure from the old type has given rise to a good deal of speculation, and new theories have been advanced to account for the peculiarity. Antiquarians, unable to define the type have turned away in weariness and disgust. The modern ecclesiastic with medieval leanings sees in the ugly blemish the hand of the reformer, and, in sorrow of heart, turns away his eyes from beholding iniquity. People who "mind the bigging o't" have left in record that a former Duke of Argyle ordered the spaces to be built up to prevent cattle and horses finding their way into the building.

This took place at a period long anterior to the movement for the restoration and preservation of ancient monuments. In days when the island was seldom visited by the stranger, and the tourist steamer was unknown.

The style of architecture in the east end of the nunnery chapel is different from the west. The roof was vaulted. The vaulting ribs were supported by four columns, one at each corner. A fragment of the base is still in its place. The vaulting ribs were carved, and the spaces between them filled in with light flat arching, when the distance between the ribs was short, with long stones reaching from one rib to another. The gable was pierced by a large double window; sixty-seven years ago it was entire; shortly after that date it gave way, and, in its fall, carried with it the vaulted roof, and smashed some of the tombstones underneath, among them that of the prioress Anna, now standing in the north-west corner of the chapel (see page 60).

In 1508-9, the king's protection was granted to "the nuns of Lady Agnes, daughter of Donald M'Laine, prioress of the monastery and convent of the most blessed Virgin,



in the Island of St. Columba, within the Lordship of the Isles." This is no doubt her tombstone. There are a number of tombstones in line east of the chapel. They have no inscription, and nothing is known of their history. Another stone, with top and bottom corners broken off, has two female figures standing in niches at the top. The decoration on the lower half seems to be of the same design as the tombstone of the four priors in Relig Oran. The fragment left of the Latin inscription round the edge reads, "Here lies Marion, daughter of John Lauchlan Lord of" . . . .

Seven years after the Reformation (1567), Queen Mary granted to "Marioun Makclaine the prioressie and nunrie of the abbey of Ycolmkill." This stone is, in all likelihood, her memorial. It stands on the left of the entrance to

*The Lady Chapel.*

The roof is vaulted. The vaulting ribs are arched with thin stones stretching from one rib to another. The ribs do not spring from columns as in the east end of the nunnery chapel, but from corbels, and is nearer the form of vaulting that preceded the early Gothic. As the Gothic builders at first used this system of vaulting, while retaining in the structure the rounded arch, there is no reason for supposing one part of the building to be older than another. A narrow stone staircase leads to the small apartment immediately over the vaulted roof. On the north side of the nunnery chapel stands

*Tempull Ronaig* (Ronan's church).

It differs slightly in orientation from the larger chapel. This was evidently the parish church before the reformation.

A document in the charter chest of Sir John Campbell of Airds and Ardnamurchan, printed for the first time by the "Iona Club" in 1847, refers to "the teinds of Ecolmkill, called the personaige of Tempill Ronaige."

"Item, the personag of Kilviceowin in Rosse."

"Item, the personag of Keilfeinchen in Mull, etc."

*Cladh Ronan* is the name given to the burial place within this enclôsure.

According to an entry in the annals of Tighernach, Ronan died abbot of Kingarth, in Bute, in 737.

*Sraid nan marbh* (street of the dead).

The present highway, leading from the nunnery to Relig Oran and the cathedral, is erroneously named "street of the dead" in all the guide books to Iona. The street of the dead began near the centre of Martyrs' bay, and passing close to the little hillock (*ella*), continued north until it reached within a short distance of the nunnery, it then took a north-easterly direction, but much nearer the schoolroom than the present road, and, passing within twenty feet of the parish manse, joined the existing road just where it begins to rise, a little farther up than the little gate leading to the parish church. From this point it led to Relig Oran, in the same direction as now. "The broad paved way, which is continued in a line from the nunnery to the cathedral,"<sup>1</sup> ran parallel to the present road—straight past M'Lean's Cross—on in front of the hôtel and Relig Oran, until it entered the cathedral enclosure between St. Martin's Cross and Dun na Manaich. Between the nunnery and the gate leading to the hôtel, and on either side of this old causeway, stood a number of houses, which formed the Balla More or great town of the island. The field in which the parish church stands formed part of the lands of Balla More, and the foundations of old houses have been found behind the church. At one time there was an arched door at each corner of the Balla More called *dorus trath* (time doors). This statement is made on the authority of a native, long since dead, but who has left on record the statement that "he remembered seeing a portion of one of the arches standing." This statement is corroborated from an older source. "A considerable citie was in the isle of old, called Sodora, the vestiges whereof are yet visible

(1) Pennant.

(1693) by the port and streets thereof. It lay in the midst of the isle upon the east coast.<sup>1</sup>

The three principal highways, mentioned by Pennant and others, approached each other near the centre of the Balla More, and this centre was, in all probability, indicated by *M'Lean's Cross*.

On the west side—the side facing the old street of the dead—there is a representation of the crucifixion in a very crude form. At the foot of the shaft there is a figure on horseback, like the one on tombstone number 5 in the ridge of the chiefs. The foliaceous scroll work is of the usual design peculiar to crosses of this type.

M'Lean's Cross has always been described in the guide books as "one of the oldest Celtic crosses in Scotland." A recent guide book states "that it stands on the *very spot*" where St. Columba rested on his way from the barn the day before his death.

Neither in form nor ornamentation is it entitled to be classed among the oldest Celtic crosses. It is of the same type of M'Kinnon's, which stands in the chapel of St. Oran, bearing an inscription with the date 1489. The Oronsay Cross is, perhaps, the best type of its class. Like M'Kinnon's, the inscription is in Latin, and was, evidently, the memorial cross of a prior who died in 1510. It has a figure of the crucifixion on the west face, like M'Lean's. Dr. Anderson's remarks, in reference to crosses of this type, are well worth remembering. "It is noticeable that the crosses, which present foliaceous scroll-work as the principal element of their decoration, usually bear the representation of the crucifixion. No such representation ever appears on the crosses or the slabs, which either exhibit the symbols, or are characterised by the presence of the pure style of Celtic art. They bear the cross, but not the crucified figure. Hence it is apparent that the latest of all these types of monuments is that which bears the crucifixion, and is

(1) Macfarlane MS., Adv. Library.

decorated with foliaceous scrolls." No account of M'Lean's Cross would be complete without some reference to the statement made by an anonymous writer in 1688, and repeated by all subsequent writers on Iona, "that M'Lean's Cross is one of the 360 standing before the reformation ; the others were thrown into the sea by order of the Synod of Argyle." Allowance, of course, must be made for the perversity of a pious imagination.

Monro, who visited Iona in 1594, thirty-three years after it had become legal to destroy whatever the people of that time considered to be "monuments of idolatry," and twenty-seven after the appointment of Marion Maclane as prioress, gives no hint that any tradition on the subject was known to the inhabitants of Iona in his day. If the crosses were destroyed before Monro's visit, surely a disaster that swept away 360 sculptured monuments that were not only conspicuous land-marks, but objects of religious veneration, would not be unrecorded in some form or other by those who felt it most. Those who are careful to perpetuate this fiction forget to note the fact that the altar, the chief monument of idolatry, was entire in 1688, one hundred and twenty years after the passing of the act legalising its destruction. When the lovers of ancient art and the devotees of medieval superstition began to visit our shores, it gradually disappeared. In 1772 an Englishman conveyed his portion to his own land. In this way the venerable relic was smashed to pieces and appropriated by the pious without condescending to consult the Synod of Argyle. Why the Catholic Presbyterians of Reformation times should have spent their strength in dragging from their sockets 360 heavy blocks of stone, and not have sufficient energy left to throw into the sea a marble slab, six feet by four, will always remain a subject of speculation for the curious.

*Kill Chainnich* (church of Kenneth) stood within the

(1) Anderson, *Scotland in early Christian Times*, p. 83.

area occupied by the present parish church, built in 1830. With the exception of the freestone used in the door and windows, all the building material was found in the island. A tombstone without an inscription was found some years ago behind the church.

The small island of Inch Kenneth is about half a mile north-east of the headland of Grubin, in Mull, and was visited by Dr. Johnson when on his way to Iona. The interior of the ruined chapel on this island continues to be used as a burial place by the natives of the neighbouring parish.

The island is named after Cainnich, the intimate friend of Columba.

## REILIG ORAIN, OR RELIC OAHRAIN.

THE Irish term for a burial place borrowed from the Latin *reliquiae* (remains), and known as the burial place of Orain, brother of St. Columba, who according to tradition, was the first of the twelve brethren buried in Iona. In the old Irish life of Columba, contained in the *Leathar Breac*, translated about 1397 from a text three centuries older, the following account is given of Orain's death :—"Colum Celli then said to his people it is good for us that our roots should go under the ground here, and he said to them, 'it is permitted to you that some one of you may go under the clay of this island to consecrate it.' Orain rose up obediently and what he said was 'If you would accept me,' said he, 'I am ready for that.' 'O Orain,' said Colum Celli, 'thou shalt have the reward therefore, viz., his prayer shall not be granted to any one at my grave unless it is from thee he asks it first.' Orain went then to heaven." He (Colum Celli), afterwards founded the church of Hii. The traditional account has more of the supernatural. Columba had received intimation from heaven that a human sacrifice was essential to the success of his mission, and that Orain offered himself and was buried alive. On the third day Columba opened the grave. Orain looked at him and said, "Death is no wonder, nor is hell as it is said." Columba's reply has passed into a proverb. "Earth; earth on Orain's eye lest he talk more."

This story was unknown to Adamnan, the biographer of Columba, who was born twenty-seven years after his

death, and had conversed with men who had known the saint. Orain's name is not mentioned by Adamnan. It is not found in the oldest list of the twelve companions who accompanied Columba to Iona. Further, Adamnan states quite clearly that Brito was the first of the brethren who died in Iona.<sup>1</sup> In the Annals of the Four Masters there is recorded the death of one Orain in 548, fifteen years before Columba came to Iona. The story on the Leathar Breac and the traditionary anex are therefore without any historical foundation.

The Gaelic words now used to denote a burial place, are *keil* and *cladh*. If proverbs prove anything the term relic seems to have been in use in the olden time.

*Biodh duil ri fear fairge ach cha bhi ri fear reilge.*<sup>2</sup>  
There is hope of the man at sea but none of the man in the relic (churchyard).

It is difficult to tell in what age Iona first became a famous place of sepulture. Some old writers place the first royal interments nearly a century before the coming of Columba, but their evidence is not sufficient to warrant us in believing that Pictish or other kings were buried in Iona, while the Roman legions were still in Britain. From the coming of Columba to the birth of Adamnan, one hundred and sixteen years had passed away. Eight Abbots of Iona had died and were buried before the biographer of Columba became Abbot of Hy. He lived at a period sufficiently removed from the time of the first Abbot to give the sepulchre of his brethren the interest and dignity of age, yet he does not mention by name any special burial place hallowed by the dust of those who had gone before him. In the case of Columba he tells us that the body was placed in a coffin (*Ratabusta*)<sup>3</sup> that was prepared for it, and buried with due reverence, and that the spot was well known in his

(1) Adam., Bk. III., Chap. 7.

(2) Gaelic proverb.

(3) Meaning not known.

own day.<sup>1</sup> Cumméne's life of Columba, which Adamnan has incorporated with his own, takes us back to within sixty years of the Saint's death, yet even in his case there is no hint given of name or locality that helps in any way to identify the original burial place of the "Family of Iona."

If we could prove that the Reilig Orain is within the bounds of what is thought to be the site of the original monastery, the presumption of its being the actual sepulchre of Columba's day would be greatly strengthened. Whether the graves of Columba's household be in this particular spot or not, of one thing we are certain that for upwards of 400 years Reilig Orain was the burial place of the kings, chiefs, and churchmen of Celtic Scotland.

Of sepulchral Christian monuments in Scotland there are only seven inscriptions in the old Celtic vernacular, and five of these are in Iona. The writer knows of four. Two are in Reilig Orain, and two in the small burial place close to the reputed grave of Columba, on the north side of the Cathedral nave. The inscription on these stones is the same in language and form as that on Irish tombstones after the ninth century. The form of the cross is the same as that found on Irish tombstones of the same date. It may be well to state before going further that the present railing was erected a number of years ago to protect the stones from the feet of the careless. Before the railing was erected they seemed to have been shifted about from one place to another, and several of them are not now in their original position. From the references made from time to time by visitors to Iona, with the help that any existing tradition could afford, we have been enabled to indicate where the stones lay when Pennant visited the island in 1772.

Monro, dean of the Isles, visited Iona in 1594, but his description is too general to be of much service. As

(1) Adam., Bk. III., Chap. 24.



Monro's account is the first authentic description given by a visitor three hundred years ago, in order to begin with something definite, we shall begin with him.

"Within this ile of Colmkill there is ane sanctuary also, or kirkyaird, called in Eirsche, *Reelig Orain*, quhilk is a very fair kirkyaird, and weill biggit about with staine and lyme. Into this sanctuary ther is three tombes of staine, formit like little chapels, with ane braid gray marble or quhin staine in the gavill of ilk ane of the tombes. In the staine of the ane tombe there is wretten in Latin letters: Tumulus Regum Scotiae, that is, the tombe or grave of the Scotts kings. Within this tombe, according to our Scotts cronikels, ther layes *forty-eight crowned Scotts kings*. . .

. . . The tombe on the south syde forsaid has this inscription: Tumulus Regum Hiberniae; that is, the tombe of the Ireland kinges: for we have in our auld Eirsche cronickells that ther wes *foure Irland kinges* eirdit in the said tombe.

"Upon the north syde of our Scotts tombe, the inscription beares: Tumulus Regum Norwegiae, that is, the tombe of the kinges of Norroway; and also we find in our Eirsche cronickells, that Caelus, king of Norroway, commandit his nobils to take his body and bury it in Colmkill, if it chancit him to die in the iles. . . . Within this sanctuary also lies the maist pairt of the Lords of the Isles with ther lynage. Twa clan lynes, with ther lynage, M'Kynnon and M'Quarie, with ther lynages, with sundries uthers, inhabitants of the haill iles. . . ."

Briefly, the chief points to note in Monro's account are as follows: The burial place was bounded on all sides by a stone and lime wall; there were three tombs formed like little chapels, with a conspicuous stone bearing in Latin letters an inscription on the gable of each. The tombs were in a line with each other north and south. The stone in the gable of the tomb at the north end of the line was inscribed the tomb of the kings of Norway, that at the

south end of the line, the tomb of the kings of Ireland, the one in the centre, the tomb of the kings of Scotland.

Monro gives very little information regarding the size or structure of the tombs. Whether they were like the "kirkyaird weill biggit about with staine and lyme," he does not say. When Pennant visited Iona, one hundred and seventy-eight years after Munro, the tombs were in a ruinous condition. "I was very desirous of viewing the tombs of the kings, described by the dean of the Isles, and from him by Buchanan. . . . But of these celebrated tombs he could discover nothing more than certain slight remains, that were built in a *ridged* form and *arched within*, but the inscriptions were lost. These are called *Iomaire-nan Righ*"—the ridge of the kings. From this description—"built in a ridged form and arched within"—one would naturally infer that they were of the same type as the dome roofed sepulchres in Ireland. These were built without mortar at a time when the principle of the arch was unknown to the builders. The royal cemeteries of New Grange and Rathkenny are of this description.<sup>1</sup>

The space enclosed by the railing does not indicate the original breadth of the ridge. This can be nearly ascertained by adding the length of the tomb stones that at one time lay on either side of the railing, to the length of those in the present enclosure. This gives about nineteen feet, the probable length of the tombs described by Monro.

Taking the stones in their present order, we note two *outside* the railing. At the south end of the ridge a beautiful stone, with interlacing bands formed into a peculiar cross, with sword on the left hand side of the cross (see page 62).

At the north end of the ridge a broad flat stone, rounded at the ends, with an incised line down the centre dividing it into two panels, one whole, the other broken about the centre. The whole panel has two incised crosses, one plain, expanding slightly at the foot, with a circular

(1) Stokes' *Christian Art in Ireland*.

depression in the middle. The other expands at all the terminations. The cross on the broken panel has all the parts connected by a circle, making angles where they intersect. All the parts expand towards their terminations. This stone, no doubt, formed part of an altar tomb. On the east side of the enclosure there is a rough block of red granite bearing an incised cross, said to be the grave of a king of France.

*Stones within the-railing.*

I. Plain Stone ; no name, inscription, nor history.

II. This stone, bearing an incised cross intersected at head, arms, and shaft, by a circle, has an incised inscription running the long way of the stone, lies near where it did in Pennant's day. "Among these stones (*i.e.*, the stones in this ridge) were found two stones with Gaelic inscriptions, and the form of a cross carved on each. The words on one were *Cros Domhail Fatasich*, *i.e.*, the cross of Donald Longshanks ; the other signified the cross of Urchvine o' Guin. The letters were those of the most ancient Irish alphabet." \*

Grahame, in his "Stones of Iona," reads the inscription *Orar Anmin Eoghain*. *Orar* (he says) stands for the Gaelic *Morar*, great man ; *Anmin*, not explainable ; *Eoghain Ewan* ; the great man Ewan. Wilson, in his pre-historic annals of Scotland, gives *or-ar armunn*, or *armin*, and renders the inscription—a prayer for the chief Eogain, or Ewan. Drummond reads it *or ar anmin*, but gives no translation.

The letters are in the old Celtic vernacular, and the formula is that in general use in Ireland after the 9th century.

*Ordo animi Eogain* = *ordo* a contraction for "*Oroit do* ;" *Oroit* the equivalent of the Latin *Oratio*. The inscription, therefore, reads, a prayer or pray for the soul of Eogain. Inscriptions on stones asking the living to pray for the

(1) Pennant.

dead are very rarely met with in Ireland before the 10th century. <sup>1</sup>

The letters and formula on this stone are of the same type as the inscription on the high cross of Clonmacnois and Monasterboice. This stone is one of the four now in Iona having inscriptions in the old Celtic vernacular.

The following particulars may be worth recording : The inscription incised ; the language is old Celtic ; the letters are Celtic and not Roman ; the formula is the same as that on Irish tombstones after the 9th century ; the cross is incised, and the form of it is contemporary with the form of the inscription. Mr. Drummond, who figured this stone in 1870, makes a strange mistake in stating that it had been removed to Inveraray.

III. Figure of an ecclesiastic, crook turned out ; no inscription ; traditional name found in an old MS. Aogh Cammachasach Eugen of the crooked legs.

IV. No name ; no inscription ; rolled moulding ; and incised line round the face.

V. No name ; no inscription ; rope moulding ; ornamentation nearly circular, running the whole length of the stone.

VI. No name, or inscription ; sandstone slab ; rolled moulding, plain.

VII. No name ; rolled moulding on face ; dog tooth round lower edge, small dog tooth on the flat of the stone.

VIII. Ornamental stone with old Celtic bell.

IX. Figure of an ecclesiastic, crook turned in ; two carved figures at foot joining hands.

X. Plain moulding ; sacramental cup near the top.

XI. Inscription illegible ; altar with cross and cup ; two figures, one with uplifted hands ; the lower and larger panel is divided into two equal portions by a sword.

XII. Supposed tombstone of Reginald, the founder of Monastery (see pp. 63, 64, and also page 25).

(1) Stokes, p. 7.

- XIII. Rope moulding on edge and top.
- XIV. Ornamentation in square panel at top; small sword on right side of stone.
- XV. Thin slab; circular design in centre of stone; nail head on lower edge and top.
- XVI. Much the same design as No. VII.
- XVII. Large flat plain stone; no inscription.
- XVIII. Plain moulding; no dog tooth; small sword in panel on right side.
- XIX. Flat plain stone.
- XX. Dog tooth on edge; round moulding; dog tooth on upper edge and moulding.

#### THE RIDGE OF THE CHIEFS.

- I. Handsome slab with scalloped edges, and an elegant sword up the centre.
- II. Peculiar cross; galley and sword on the right side of the stone.
- III. Rolled moulding and circular ornamentation all over the stone.
- IV. Galley at top of stone; figure of an armed Highlander in the centre; part of the inscription legible "Hic Jacet..... M'Leoid," this stone formerly lay in the Ridge of the Kings.
- V. No name or inscription; probably the tombstone of a MacLean (see pp. 66, 67), called The Rider.
- VI. Almost obliterated; large circular design almost covering the whole face of the stone.
- VII. Rope moulding; animals at top; the upper part of the stone has the circular design, common to many of the other stones; the lower part has a lattice pattern unlike any of the other stones.
- VIII. Allan of the Faggots, a well-known Pirate of the MacLean clan; a finely carved stone with the figure of a Galley near the top (see pp. 65, 67).

IX. Blemish in centre ; square panel at top with interlaced Celtic work ; nail head ornament on edge and top of stone.

X. No inscription ; short sword on right side ; no name.

XI. Obliterated ; no name.

XII. Square panel at top with ornament like a number of the other stones ; sword down the centre ; dog tooth moulding on upper edge.

XIII. MacLean of Duart (see page 68).

XIV. Tombstone of the Four Priors (see pp. 66-69). This stone formerly lay in the Ridge of the Kings.

XV. MacLean of Loch Buie.

XVI. MacLean of Coll (see pp. 71-73).

XVII. Galley and stag hunt (see pp. 65-67).

XVIII. A figure on horseback, another figure is playing on an Irish harp. Tradition points out this stone as the tombstone of *Ioin a chinn bhig*, John of the little head. It was a common belief in the olden time that this personage always appeared when a member of his family was about to die. A little over fifty years ago a native of the island declared that he saw Ioin pass him at MacLean's cross on his black horse, with his little head under his arm.

XIX. Inscription :—Here lies John Beton, physician to the family of the MacLean's, who died 19th November, 1657, aged 63.

Donald Beton made me, 1674.

The motto in the centre is as follows :—

“Behold : he who saved so many others from ills, himself falls by the conquering dart of wicked death. Glory to God alone.” The Betons were of Irish descent, and famous physicians in Islay and Mull. They were also the *sennachies* or historians of the clan MacLean. This John Beton was the last of his order.

STONE WITH PECULIAR CROSS.

Outside of this enclosure, but in a line with it at the north end, there is a freestone slab fixed on edge, with an

incised Irish cross and inscription almost obliterated. Fifty years ago it lay on the Ridge of the Kings, near the old stone (N. 2) already described, and is one of the two mentioned by Pennant (see pp. 84, 86). Grahame, in his "Stones of Iona," calls the inscription the "disputed inscription," and gives the following translation: *ōr* = *mor*, "the great;" the stroke over the O supplies the place of an M. Domhail, *Donull* = "Donald," *Fataric* = *Phadruig*, pronounced *Fataric* = of Patrick, *i.e.*, the great Donald of Patrick. There is strong reason (says Grahame) to believe that this is the fragment of a tombstone placed over Alexander Macdonald, the second of the Glengary line, killed in 1461. Others have translated the inscription the cross of Donald Longshanks. Wilson, in his "Annals," remarks, "an older decipherer reads it Cormac Ulphada hic est situs, indicative of the sepulchre of Cormack Barbatus, one of the kings of Ireland, buried there A.D. 213." The older decipherer referred to by Wilson is Lord Buchan, who speaks of long stones having long inscriptions in the British character. There are no stones answering to Lord Buchan's description now in this burial place. The inscription on this stone is similar to the old one on the Ridge of the Kings, and reads:

Ordo mael Patrick—pray for Maelpatrick.

CLACH BRATH.

A little off the line of this ridge, and near the edge of the path that leads to the door of the chapel, lies a broad flat stone, having a slit in the upper, and a circular cavity in the lower half of the face. Pennant saw this stone in its original position, and thus describes it: "A little north-west of the door is the pedestal of a cross; on it are certain stones that seem to have been the support of a tomb. Numbers who visit the island . . . think it incumbent on them to turn each of those stones round according to the course of the sun. They are called *clachabraith*, for it is thought that the *braith*, or end of the world, will

not arrive till the stone on which they stand is worn through."

Sacheverel, governor of Man, who visited Iona eighty years before Pennant, speaks of three noble globes of white marble placed in three stone basins, and these were turned round; and he further adds that the Synod of Argyle ordered them to be thrown into the sea.

A native of Iona has committed to writing his recollection of the stones. "The writer remembers to have seen lying upon a massive flagstone, which stood at a short distance from the door of the chapel on the south side, twelve small *free* stones, ornamentally shaped, which each visitor was supposed to turn three times round. These stones were called *clachan brath*. . . . They have long since vanished." Shortly, the three "noble globes" of white marble which Governor Sacheverell *did not see*, were thrown into the sea by order of the Synod of Argyle. The stones described by Pennant were evidently substituted for the originals, and in course of time vanished, we suppose, at the command of the Synod of Argyle. The ornamental stones, described by the old Ionian, had long before 1850 gone the way of their predecessors, without the permission of the Synod of Argyle. Ultimately, this peculiar stone itself disappeared, and no trace of it could be found for many years. When a grave was being opened about six years ago, the writer identified the stone. It was found beneath the surface exactly in the same position as now. An old native present at the time told me that, when a boy at school, he had often turned round the small stones that lay in the cavity. These have also vanished, but there is no record that the Synod of Argyle was ever consulted about the matter. Quite, near the *clach brath*, on the east side, there is a stone much worn. In a panel at the top a small figure can be traced with staff and wallet. Grahame calls this stone the pilgrim.

There is another old stone beside this one, with a short



sword on the right side. The pilgrim formerly lay on the Ridge of the Kings.

#### ST. ORAN'S CHAPEL,

Is 29 feet  $\times$  15 feet  $\times$  10 feet, there is no window in the east-end but there is a small looped window splayed on the inside on each side of the altar place. The freestone arch on the south side is of a much later date than the rest of the building. The mouldings of the Norman doorway are sculptured with peculiar ornaments like the heads of animals. The present chapel no doubt occupies the site of an older one and is thought by some writers to have been built by Queen Margaret after Malcolm Canmore became King of the Isles in 1072. The stones in this building are as follows: shaft of M'Kinnon's cross with inscription in Latin. This is the cross of Lachlan Mackinnon and his son John Abbot of Hy (Iona) made in the year of our Lord 1489.

Tombstone of M'Quarrie of Ulva. (See page 72.)

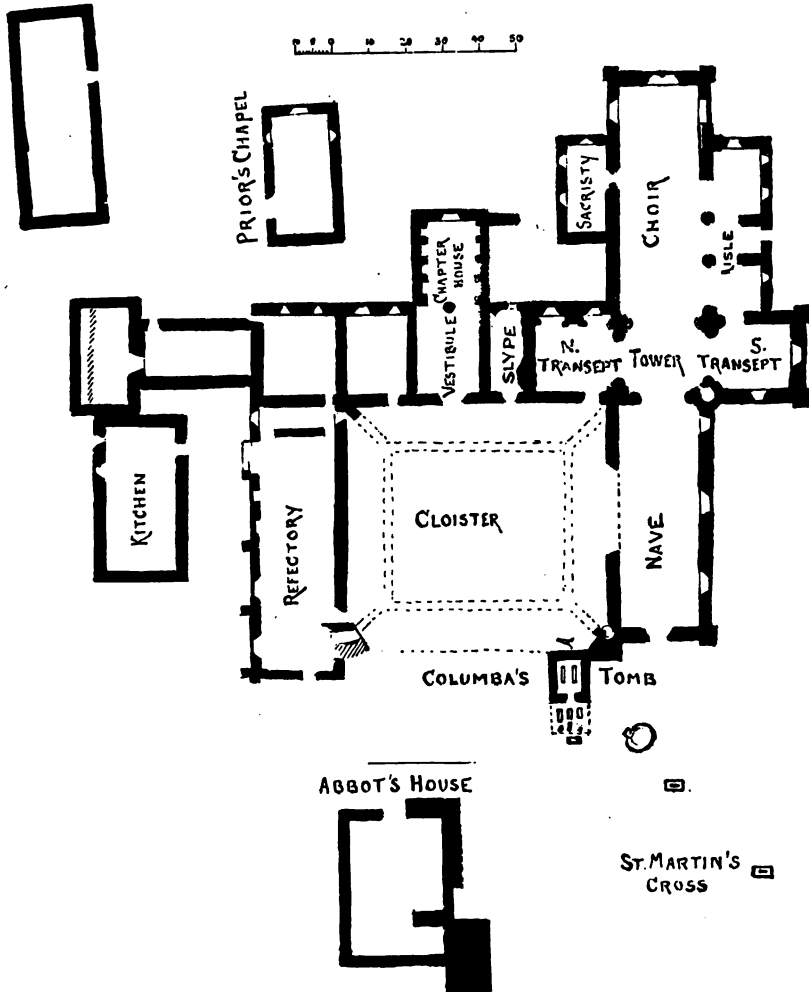
- " " Irish Cross.
- " " M'Lean of Grulin.
- " " Angus Macdonald (who fought with Bruce at Bannockburn).
- " " Paul na Sporan.
- " " Flat stone of Oran (part of a cross).
- " " Prior Christopher. (See page 74.)

A few other stones large and small the history of which nothing is known.

#### THE MONASTERY RUINS.

The western boundary wall of the enclosure ran at one time between the Abbey Church and Dun na Manaich. (See page 87.) There are people still living who remember seeing what is now the public road on the west side of this hillock, cultivated as part of a field outside the Abbey enclosure. The old dry built stone wall began where the surface of the ground is almost level with the present south

wall, and running northwards through the ruined building, called the Abbot's House, joined the north wall of the



PLAN OF CATHEDRAL.

enclosure where the rocky hillock comes abruptly to a point. A deep ditch ran parallel to the south wall, the whole length of the enclosure. We have not been able to ascertain when

the rocky eminence near the entrance first became associated with St. Columba's name. In Martin's day it was not even called Abbot's Mount. The supposition that the monastery ruins occupied the site of Columba's original monastery, naturally led to the inference that this hillock was the "little hill" mentioned by Adamnan as overlooking the monastery, and which Columba ascended the day before his death. There are several instances where names have been given to particular places that were unknown to the old inhabitants of Iona, and the name Abbot's Mount seems to be one of them. It is hardly necessary to state that none of the buildings here belong to the far away age in which Columba erected with wood and wattle the first cathedral of the Isles. They are not all of the same date, parts of the same building are often of different dates. On the north side of the Abbey Church there is a chapel 33 feet in length; in the field on the south outside of the enclosure stands an old ruin called St. Mary's Chapel; west of the nave and near the reputed Tor Abb are the remains of another old building; near the door of the nave a small oratory, and in the north-east corner of the enclosure near the boundary wall the foundation of a large oblong building. The size, orientation, and relative position of these buildings, indicate that they belong to a period long anterior to the establishment of the monastery founded by Reginald in 1203. The most interesting is perhaps that called Columba's tomb. On the north side of the entrance to the Cathedral nave, part of the cloister wall forms the east end of this small oratory. According to tradition the tomb on the south side of the altar is the grave of Columba, that on the north, the grave of his attendant Diarmaid. There are several reasons for thinking that this little oratory occupies the site of an ancient and famous place of sepulchre. The beautiful Celtic cross, "decorated in the purest style of Celtic art,"<sup>1</sup> stands, not in the centre opposite the altar, but opposite the tomb on the south side of it.

(1) Marked A on plan.

The small enclosure at the west-end is paved with ancient tombstones, two of which have inscriptions in the old Celtic vernacular. Its agreement in dimensions and design with the old Irish type, tends to strengthen the belief that here stood a building that was old and ruinous ages before the foundations of the present Abbey church were laid. The building may not be part of the first, second, or even third, stone monastery erected by the "Family of Iona," but the characteristics mentioned mark it as the successor of a stone building that might have been erected in the beginning of the 9th century.

The first wooden monastery was burnt by the Danes in 802. A few years afterwards the Irish monks began to use stone in the construction of their buildings. The Columban church at Kells was built in 814 by Cellach, Abbot of Iona. If the ravages of the Danes compelled the Irish monks to change their building material from wood to stone, their brethren in Iona had the same reason to do likewise. "It may be assumed" (says Skene) "that when the monastic buildings were once constructed of stone the monastery would always be continued in the same place."

When Diarmaid returned from Ireland with the shrine of St. Columba after the destruction of the wooden monastery by the Danes, a stone building had in all probability been erected in Iona, between the date of the last burning in 802 and the arrival of Diarmaid in 818, and in this would be placed the shrine of the founder. In Adamnan's day Columba's remains had not been moved. When Bede wrote his history in 735 they were still in the grave that had been prepared for them 138 years before. A reference in the Book of Armagh, 72 years after this date, implies that they had been enshrined and carried to Ireland. In 818 we have seen that Diarmaid carried back the shrine to Iona. In 825 the Danes again plundered the island, but the brethren, warned of their approach, hid the shrine in the

(1) Celtic Scotland, Vol. II. p. 299.

earth and covered it with sods. Blathmach, the prior, refused to disclose the place where it was concealed, and the Danes cut him to pieces where he stood. In 878 the shrine was once more taken to Ireland. From an incident in the Life of St. Cadroë the shrine seems to have been again brought back to Iona. In 1127, according to the popular belief of that time, its resting place was Downpatrick. Dr. Skene is of opinion that after the martyrdom of Blathmach in 825, a small oratory was erected over the spot where the shrine had been concealed, and he thinks that the traditional tomb of Columba may be that oratory. Local tradition points to Cladh an Diseart (see plan, page 87) as the original burial place, and associates the two upright stones there with Columba's grave. Both traditions may be true. If the original monastery burnt by the Danes was near that spot, Columba's grave would most likely be there. When the remains were enshrined and a stone building erected, they would be placed in that. In this corner once stood a very remarkable stone, the Black Stone of Iona. It may be of interest to note what is said about it by several visitors to Iona. "In a corner are some black stones held so sacred . . . that it was customary to swear by them, perhaps from their being neighbours to the tutelar saint whose grave is almost adjacent."<sup>1</sup> Martin says the stones were grey and not black. Dr. Johnson states that the place where they were concealed was said to be known. Subsequent writers on Iona have followed with more or less faithfulness these inaccurate references. An Irish tourist who visited Iona in 1771, one year before Pennant, and two before Johnson, refers to the stone as follows: "Next to Columba's tomb is the Black Stone of Hy; to swear standing upon it was accounted the most sacred and binding kind of oath . . . it is now sunk in the earth so that only a part of it can be seen." We find a description of the Black Stone in the words of an old

(1) Pennant, Vol. II. p. 303.

native who saw it when entire. "It was about five feet high and flat at the back. On the front was the figure of a priest in his robes, which bulging out from the stone, tapered from the shoulder to a point at the top. The stone was destroyed about a dozen years ago (*i.e.*, 1817) by a mad fellow who imagined that it would bewitch the inhabitants if allowed to remain." As this Black Stone (not stones) has always been associated with the tomb of Columba, it may very well have been an effigy of the Saint himself. In any case the fact of such a stone being in this spot is very significant, and goes a long way to support the theory that this was the oratory where the bones of Columba rested, where Blathmach was buried, into which Magnus, King of Norway, looked and ordered it to be closed for ever.

ST. MARTIN'S CROSS (see pp. 79-81).

ST. MATTHEW'S CROSS.

A block of freestone 6 feet 7 inches in height, and 22 inches in breadth at base.

ST. JOHN'S CROSS.

Opposite the tomb of Columba, 4 feet 11 inches, and 21 inches broad at base. This is the finest Celtic cross in Iona. Dr. Anderson thinks that there is nothing finer of its kind in Scotland. "There is also a very interesting fragment of a cross shaft at Iona, which presents no figure subjects, but is decorated in the purest style of Celtic art, with such inimitable beauty and intricacy and harmony of design that I am safe in saying of it that no finer specimen of art workmanship exists in Scotland."<sup>1</sup>

WELL.

No special name. Described by some as the entrance to an underground passage.

Small stone coffin with cross on the south end called by the old natives the cradle of the north wind, and in the guide books, the trough in which the pilgrims washed their feet.

(1) Anderson, p. 79.

**NAVE.**

Is without aisles, and is about the same breadth as the choir. The portion of the south wall nearest the tower is the oldest. So little of the north wall remains that it is difficult to tell what the design was.

In the angles formed by the north wall and the west front there is a small irregular apartment, entered by a door in the interior of the nave. The position of the window or loop, covering as it does the entrance to the building, indicates this small chamber to have been the porter's lodge.

**NORTH TRANSEPT.**

The east wall has the chief characteristics of Norman architecture. Although the arches leading to this transept and the one near on the west side of the tower are acutely pointed, this difference in type need not indicate any difference in age, as both forms were often united in the same design by builders of the 12th century. This transept, the lower portion of the tower, and the north wall of the choir are the oldest parts of the Abbey Church. The capital of the north pillar has a rude representation of the temptation. On the pillar on the west side, near the entrance to the staircase are two figures, the one holding a pair of scales, the other about to place something in the scales. The cluster of capitals on the south pillar of the tower are decorated with various designs. On the capital facing the choir there is a Latin inscription in Lombardic characters—"Donaldus Obrolchan made this work." On the side facing the south transept an animal with two figures holding it. The figure in front holds what looks like an axe. The other figure seems to be engaged in some act of worship. Above is a dog hunting a hare. The pillar of the semi-circular arch through which the aisle is entered from the south transept, has a representation of the expulsion from Eden,

**FIRST PILLAR OF POINTED ARCH.**

A man holding some large animal with a rope.

## SECOND PILLAR.

The crucifixion, a seated figure with winged figures on each side, one holding a harp, Peter striking off Malcus' ear, an angel weighing souls, the devil trying to depress one of the scales with his claws.

## THIRD PILLAR.

Dragons and other mythical monsters. A figure on horseback armed with a spear and followed by a footman with battle axe and helmet.

## CHOIR, NORTH SIDE.

The two pointed arches on the north side of the choir have their mouldings covered with the dog-tooth ornament, and are supported by a circular column with a sculptured capital. It is difficult to tell what the original intention of the builder was. There is no evidence in the wall itself that the base of the column ever rested on the floor of the building. The door leading to the sacristy is of a much later date. The arch is semi-circular. The label is supported by sculptured capitals and corbels.

ABBOT M'KINNON (page 74).

M'LEOD OF M'LEOD (page 80).

COLUMBA'S PILLOW AND HEART-SHAPED STONE (page 80).

NEIL OF THE ROSS (page 77).

This stone lay at one time on the floor of the choir.

Piscina is of the same material as the sedilia, and although much defaced by weathering the outlines of winged figures can be distinctly traced.

Sedilia having been constructed of rough grained sandstone and exposed to the wind and rain of centuries has suffered considerably. The main features can, however be traced. The capitals are sculptured, and differ in design. The corbel and canopy are decorated with winged figures. The termination of the labels is decorated with sculptured heads.

ABBOT M'KENZIE (see page 77).



## THE AISLE.

The three pointed arches that open to the choir and the semi-circular one that opens to the south transept, are of the same age and type (14 cent.). The semi-circular arch would probably have been pointed like the others had the height of the roof permitted. The aisle is divided into three parts by what looks like flying buttresses, but what are really sections of arches, the lower end resting on strongly built piers, and the upper butting, or leaning like props against the arch immediately above the capitals. The window in the east-end, when entire, was of beautiful workmanship. The upper half was almost completely filled in with stone tracery. The lower less ornamental.

MACIAN OF ARDNAMURCHAN (see pp. 83-85).

## THE CLOISTERS

Are entered by the semi-circular moulded doorway in the west front of the north transept. Of the four arches in the angles of the cloister, only one is left. The stone coping on the arch fixes the pitch of the roof.

The single specimen left of the open arcade of stone built on the cloister basement, shows that the arches were pointed. The mouldings are different and one of the sections has the dog-tooth ornament.

The Chapter House is entered from the cloisters by a round-headed doorway leading to the vestibule, which is the same size as the Chapter House. The arches bear a striking resemblance to the two on the north side of the choir. The only strongly marked difference between them is the form of the arch. The choir arches are slightly pointed, those in the chapter are semi-circular. Both have the dog-tooth ornament in profusion. The design and ornamentation of the capitals is almost the same on both. The four plain arches in the interior and on either side containing in their recesses the original stone seats formed no part of the first building. They were evidently built for the purpose of supporting the vaulted roof.

The wall built over the vaulting at the west end is quite separate from the older wall, which seems to indicate that it was built when the arches were inserted.

The Refectory is the largest building belonging to the monastery proper, and is said to be a good specimen of thirteenth century work. The lower story is on a level with the cloister pavement, and is lighted by a looped window. One entrance to the building was through the ruined door at the west end of the cloister. The other at the east angle.

Behind this is the kitchen. There is no appearance of any fire-place. It would very likely be on the middle of the floor. In the wall of a building facing the south-east end of the kitchen, those who care to look can see a cross with a panel on the side. It was built into the wall by the lovers of ancient art, twenty-five years ago. It is the only cross of this type in Iona.

#### THE TOWER

Is seventy-five feet high and inclines in a little near the top where the parapet begins. The first story of the tower rose in a single stage above the edge of the roof with a parapet like the church, and finished at the top with a steep roof within the parapet with gables towards the north and south. The stone staircase led to the apartment above the arches.

The frame of the north window is square but arched within, and the label of the arch is slightly decorated with the dog-tooth ornament. The interior of the east window is divided into two compartments by a pillar with moulded capitals and base. The length of the pillar is divided into equal parts by two moulded bands. These improvements were made in the fourteenth century. The tower is lighted on the south side by a window with spiral mullions set in a square frame.

## THE CARVED STONES.

The burial ground of Iona is not only the most ancient, but is the most interesting and extensive of the kind in Scotland. The precincts of the Nunnery and of St. Oran's Chapel, with the Cathedral itself, are literally paved with stones, many of them carved in a most elaborate and beautiful manner, commemorative of island chiefs and Celtic ecclesiastics,

You never tread upon them, but you set  
Your feet upon some reverend history.

In the Reilig Orain or burial ground of St. Oran, seem to have been buried the kings of the Dalriadic Scots; historians generally agree that it was a place of royal sepulture between the great epochs of Kenneth MacAlpine and Malcolm Canmore; and till a comparatively late period, it was the resting-place of many of the Hebridean chiefs who recognised no law but that of the sword.

While there are many stones of a probably earlier date, the most interesting, in a general way, are those dating from about the thirteenth to the early sixteenth century. They are mostly cut in a tough kind of mica-schist found upon the island, or when large blocks were necessary, perhaps brought from the larger neighbouring Island of Mull. Among elaborate ornamentation appear animals of various kinds, but whether they are symbolic, family devices, or merely the vagaries of a wild fancy, it is often impossible to say. One of the characteristics is the manner in which they are

introduced, often face to face, with their tails rolling away into complicated tracery over the whole length of the stone. The tracery itself is of a style peculiar to the western districts of Scotland ; the branches either roll along the whole length of the stone, or twist and curl over and under each other in vine-like branches bearing single or double leaves. Frequently the tracery fills a square panel, in which case the foliage springs from the centre, the design being based upon the simplest geometrical principles. The Celtic carver never quite fell in with southern Gothic design ; a form of the fourteenth and fifteenth century cusped arch sometimes appears above a figure, but whenever an approach to the general form has been obtained, the designer usually wanders back towards the conventional style of ornamentation to which he had been accustomed. The carving is generally very good, and the result nearly always beautiful.

The full-sized effigies are extremely peculiar ; they are of a type which is confined to the west of Scotland, being entirely different from those on the east and other parts of the country, which are of the same type as those in England. Here civilisation was slow to penetrate ; the people had little or no intercourse with the civilised parts of the kingdom till about the close of the sixteenth century, and even after that for about a hundred years, only as fighting men. They led the lives of savage islanders, following the same customs, wearing the same costume, and using the same weapons which their ancestors had done for hundreds of years. Hence, but for some change in the form of a sword, and the introduction occasionally of armour of plate, one might date the sculptures at a period very much earlier than that to which they belong. The bascinet—or head-piece—which is usually of a similar form, was that in use towards the end of the thirteenth and in the following century in the Lowlands and in England ; the quilted surcoat is peculiar to the Celtic figures ; a spear

is often held in the right hand ; and the sword, an old form of claymore, is usually placed towards the front instead of at the side of the figure. At the period to which these effigies belong, the war equipment which was in vogue in the south was formed entirely of plate armour, while that protection only appears here on the knees, legs, and feet.

The frequent appearance of a lymphad, or one masted galley, was a badge or heraldic device common to many, if not all, of the island chiefs ; it was differenced for the various clans or septs by having the sail furled or spread, without, or with, oars erect or in action, a flag or flame at the masthead or prow, etc.

With very few exceptions, it is highly probable that these interesting carvings were the work of local carvers, of whom there may have been a school or successive families in Iona ; similar stones exist in other localities not very far distant, such as Dalmally, Ardchattan, and the Islands of Oronsay, Islay, and Innishail on Loch Awe. In many cases these may have been executed by carvers from Iona, while it is a well-known fact that up till almost the present time, carved grave slabs have been removed from Iona and other places where they were originally placed, and used for another place of sepulture.

The following examples have been selected as being of most interest in a general sense, and with a few exceptions have been measured and drawn from the originals. The exceptions are taken from Drummond's "*Stones of Iona*," and Graham's "*Antiquities of Iona*," both scarce books, and the former valuable as well. Since these publications were issued, much of the finer surface carving on some of the stones has been considerably worn down.

#### PRIORESS ANNA.

Part of a slab in very low relief preserved in the Nunnery. The head rests upon a pillow which is smoothed



PRIORESS ANNA.

down by two little angels; a circular mirror and comb are at the top; and half-way down the figure are two little dogs, one at each side—probably emblems of constancy. The stone, which now measures 4 feet 2½ inches, contained another figure placed the reverse way, a part of which now only remains, beneath the feet of which is the inscription, “SANCTA MARIA ORA PRO ME.” The stone was entire in 1772, when Pennant drew and described the figure of which the most part is gone, as “the form of the Virgin Mary, with head crowned and mitred; the child in her arms; and, to denote her Queen of Heaven, a sun and moon appear above.”

From the design of the stone, it must have originally lain in a horizontal position, and the remaining part of the inscription reads “(TER)LETI FILIA QUONDAM PRIORISSA DE IONA QUÆ OBIIT ANO M Dº xlºiii EJUS ANIMAM ALTISSIMUS COMMENDAMUS.” In Pennant’s time these words were preceded by “HIC JACET DOMINA ANNA DONALDI,” reading at length—“*Here lies the Lady Anna (daughter) of Donald M’Tearlach, formerly prioress of Iona, who died in the year 1543, whose soul we commend to the Most High.*”

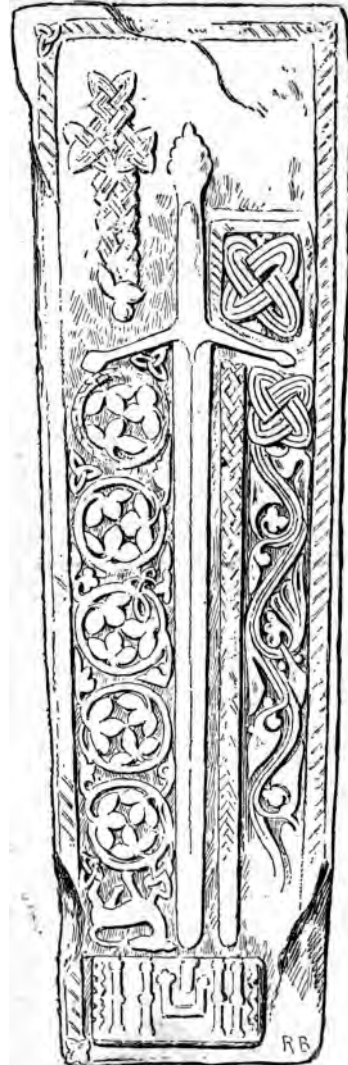
### INTERLACED CROSS, ETC.

This elegantly designed cross may be assigned to the twelfth century, and lies in the burial ground of St. Oran. On the dexter side of the cross is a lymphad or galley with a flag projecting from the prow, and on the sinister side is a sword of very ancient form. Some vestiges of carving near the prow of the galley, slightly suggest the shape of a bird, but it is difficult to say whether that is so, or if the resemblance is merely accidental, and a remnant of the decoration of the now much worn surface. It measures about 6 feet in length.

The interlacing of bands or lines is characteristic of,



INTERLACED  
CROSS.



CROSS, SWORD, AND  
CASKET.



and common to, both Scottish and Irish Celtic work ; it appears on the carved powder-horns till quite a recent period, and is perpetuated till the present day on the hilt of the Highland dirk. Great attention was given to make the bands or lines cross over and under each other alternately, and the designs resulting from an adherence to this principle, although not artistic, in the sense that they are more ingenious than fanciful, are often extremely elegant and pleasing to the eye. The art reached its highest degree of excellence in the work of the early Irish illuminators.

### CROSS, SWORD, AND CASKET.

This has been one of the most beautiful stones on the island, and belongs to the thirteenth century. At the top is a small cross of interlaced work, and at the foot is a strongly bound box or casket which, according to one tradition contained the cross sent from the Pope, and according to another, from Jerusalem. At the sinister side of the sword-blade is a band of interlaced work, which, although narrower than the blade, may have been intended for the scabbard. Among the foliated ornament on the dexter side, near the handle of the sword, there appears twice the form of a *triquetra*—a small triangular banded ornament formed of three curves ; this is one of the most remarkable ornaments found in Celtic art, and from its frequent appearance on ecclesiastical antiquities before and after the tenth century, would appear to have been an emblem of the Trinity.

The stone, which is nearly 6 feet long, is supposed to have covered the grave of Ranald, or Reginald, Lord of the Isles ; he was the son of Somerled, who finished and endowed Saddel Abbey, which was begun by his father ;<sup>1</sup> was the ancestor of all the MacDonalds, called King of Man and

(1) *Origines Parochiales*.

the Isles, and was liegeman to John and Henry III. of England, in 1212 and 1213.<sup>1</sup>

### GALLEY AND STAG-HUNT.

Attributed to one of the MacLeans, and lies in Reilig Orain; the panel at the top belongs to a class of design appearing on several other stones, such as those of the Four Priors and MacIain of Ardnamurchan, but not so well designed; under this is a lymphad with the sail unfurled; and the lower part is filled in with interlaced bands springing from two animals with their feet against each other, not carrying out any idea of a pre-conceived or symmetrical design, but meandering and twisting about with no other apparent intention than that of filling up a vacant space. At the foot is a stag attacked by four dogs. It is about 6 feet long, and is supposed to have covered the grave of a MacLean who lived between 1513 and 1542,<sup>2</sup> who was known as *Ailean-nan-Sop*, or Allan of the Straw, from the fact that he was born upon straw.<sup>3</sup> It is said that he was the illegitimate son of a chief of the MacLeans of Duart, his mother being a beautiful girl of the same clan. She was afterwards married by MacLean of Torloisk, the boy frequently coming to see his mother: being an object of dislike to his step-father, the latter one day maliciously burned the child's hands with some hot cakes prepared for him by his mother, in order to make him discontinue his visits. Being active and strong for his years, he embarked on board one of those piratical vessels which then infested the western coasts, and in course of time came to be in command of several ships by which he amassed considerable plunder. After the death of his mother, he landed on the island of Ulva with the intention of taking possession of

(1) Dean Howson's *Notes on Antiquities of Argyleshire*.

(2) *Origines Parochiales*.

(3) *Sop* is sometimes translated "faggots" (Scott).

that island from MacQuarrie, but was drawn into partaking of the hospitality of that chief, who cunningly reminded him of the injury done him by his step-father, whereupon he returned to Torloisk, slew the chief, and took possession of his castle, where he established a distinguished branch of the clan.<sup>1</sup>

### THE RIDER.

Lying in Reilig Orain is the slab known as "The Rider," with a horseman armed with a spear at the top, and below him another figure on the dexter side, probably an ecclesiastic, bearing a purse or bag. The inscription, which was opposite the last figure has long disappeared; the rest of the space is occupied by an old form of sword, with an animal at each side of the handle, and a roll of leaf ornament at each side of the blade. Stones of this form, narrower at the foot than at the top, appear usually at an earlier date than those the same breadth all the way down; and although this alone is not absolute proof of a very early date, yet, taken in conjunction with the ancient form of the sword and the design of the ornament, the stone may be set down as belonging to the fourteenth century. The stone is about 6 feet in length.

### THE FOUR PRIORS.

This very much defaced stone which lies in Reilig Orain has been a very beautiful and interesting example. The inscription, now also much worn away, read—"HIC JACENT QUATUOR PRIORES DE Y, EX UNA NATIONE, JOHANNES, HUGONIUS, PATRICIUS, IN DECRETIS OLIM BACULARIUS, ET ALTER HUGONIUS QUI OBIIT ANNO DOMINI MILLESIMO QUINGENTESIMO." The stone therefore belongs to the year 1500, when Hugh the second of the name, and fourth of these priors died.

(1) Sir Walter Scott. Some other writers say "Duart" instead of "Torloisk."



GALLEY AND STAG-HUNT.



THE RIDER.

On a narrow space at the top are the figures of a dog chasing another animal—probably a hare. The designs on the panels are of the same class as the one on the stone of MacIan of Ardnamurchan, and one of them nearly resembles the carving on a fragment of a cross with the same date in the priory church of Ardchattan, on Loch Etive.

### MACLEAN OF DUART.

This effigy probably belongs to the early part of the 16th century. On the top of the helmet is a small plum falling back over the flat part of the stone, and the sword is of an older type than this date. The shield is of a peculiar shape, different from those on other Scottish effigies, and is partly held by a strap passing over the shoulders: the bearings upon it, including the ornamental border, are not treated in accordance with the laws of heraldry, which at that time were probably not well known in the Western Islands, but rather in the earlier form of a mere badge or device, and represent a winged two-footed animal over an embattled tower. These bearings do not correspond with the arms of the MacLeans further than that one of the branches of the clan is represented in the book of James Esplin, Marchmont Herald, of 1630, as carrying for crest a tower embattled argent. The stone measures 6 feet 11½ inches by 27¾ inches; it has no inscription, and lies in Reilig Orain.

The Duart Macleans were the most powerful and distinguished of the clan, and the most prominent in the history of Scotland; their principal stronghold was Duart Castle, the ruins of which still exist, overlooking the Sound of Mull on the north-east part of that island. The MacLean of Duart was one of two or three western chiefs with whom King James IV. held frequent communication, and endeavoured by means of grants of money and land to secure their influence and help in reducing their fellow chieftains to obedience. An earlier head of the house was slain at the



THE FOUR PRIORS.



MACLEAN OF DUART.

ferociously contested battle of Harlaw in 1411, when Donald of the Isles invaded the north of Scotland. About the year 1439 Lauchlan MacLean, who was notorious for the spoils and the murders which he committed, broke into the mainland, and with Murdoch Gibson carried fire and sword into the heart of Lennox where he slew the Colquhoun of Luss.

The probable date of the stone may correspond with that Lauchlan, known as Lauchlan Cattanach, who led the MacLeans at Flodden in 1513, from which he returned to his island lair to organise a rebellion in the Highlands. He was married to Elizabeth, daughter of Archibald, second Earl of Argyle. The tradition is, that owing to quarrels, he determined to get rid of her, and caused her to be placed on a rock at low tide so that she might be drowned. From this rock, known as the Lady's Rock, between Lismore and Mull, she was rescued by some passing boatmen, and taken to her brother; this led to the assassination of the MacLean in Edinburgh.<sup>1</sup> His successor, Hector, was one of the chiefs seized as hostages for their better behaviour when King James V. led his fleet along the coast to overawe the islanders. In 1594, when the Isles could fit out six thousand men, two thousand of whom were clad in armour, all hardy fierce fighters, Lauchlan MacLean was second in command under Argyle at the battle of Glenlivet, where by his colossal stature and great strength he was conspicuous as he fought in the then old fashioned shirt of mail with a double edged Danish battle-axe. This chief, known as Lauchlan Mor, was said to have had no equal in war and prowess; he was nurtured in the Lowlands, was a man of some education, and was in treaty with Queen Elizabeth to assist her in the Irish war. Although she demurred at the funds, he assisted her so far, that when the fleet of Clan Ranald halted at Mull on its passage, by "bauld onset and pratty feit of weir," he seized the ships and imprisoned the men. He was treacherously slain by a nephew in Isla in 1598.<sup>2</sup>

(1) Gregory's *History of the Highlands, etc.*

(2) Tytler's *History of Scotland*.

## MACLEAN OF COLL.

The costume of this figure is peculiar to, and characteristic of, those of the Isles and Western Highlands of Scotland. The bascinet for the protection of the head, although appearing as pointed, takes the form of a ridge passing over the top of the head; the tippet of mail, attached to the bascinet, protects the neck, upper part of the breast, and the shoulders; the body and arms are protected by a thick quilted surcoat; and the legs and feet are armed with greaves and sollerets of plate. The claymore is of an older style of weapon than the date of the figure, is such as could be wielded by one hand, and is something of the same form as one still preserved by the Coll MacLeans which they believe to have belonged to the founder of the family.<sup>1</sup> The latter weapon is of a more elegant shape, has a quatrefoil at each extremity of the guard, and is about two inches shorter than the one represented on the stone. An inscription formerly on the raised surface at each side of the head has long been obliterated: but it may be assigned to the late fifteenth century. The stone measures 6 feet 11 inches in length, and lies in Reilig Orain.

The island which gives name to this branch of the MacLeans lies farther north than Iona. It was forfeited by John, Lord of the Isles, Earl of Ross, in 1475, afterwards restored, and finally forfeited in 1493. Early in the fifteenth century, Alexander, Earl of Ross, appears to have granted the lands and barony of Coll to John, styled Garve, son of Lauchlan MacLean of Duart, who was the founder of the family. The Castle of Coll was called "*Breacha*"—the spotted field.<sup>2</sup>

Another stone in Reilig Orain very similar to this, is attributed to a MacLaine of Loch Buie; the differences

(1) Figured in *The Book of the True Highlanders*.

(2) *Origines Parochiales*.



consist of the bascinet being rather less pointed, the right hand buckles the sword to the belt, the pommel of the sword is leaf-shaped, the surface of the slab is less decorated, and it is about seven inches shorter. It is evidently of about the same period as that of the Coll MacLean's.

### MACQUARRIE OF ULVA.

This elaborately carved effigy is in the chapel of St. Oran. At each side of the head grotesque animals appear; at his right side are two hounds running, and lower down at his left foot another is shown attacking a stag. The flat part of the stone has doubtless been covered with carving, and the inscription at his head has long been illegible. The shield bears a lymphad with furled sail, and a flag of three points near the prow over two grotesque animals, within a bordure. The bascinet protects the sides of the head as far down as the nose, and has a dip at the centre of the forehead slightly suggestive of the very ancient form of the nasal. The camail, or mail tippet, has been very carefully carved, and shows a different and finer method of expressing the rings forming the mail, than has been resorted to in the other figures; the quilted surcoat has double sleeves, and the hand is guantleted—probably with leather. The animal at the feet is destroyed, but the portion remaining is more suggestive of a lion than a dog, which appears on some of the others. The stone measures 6 feet 8 inches in length, and belongs to the late fifteenth, or early sixteenth century.

The MacQuarries—the Clan Guarie—do not appear to any great extent in Scottish history; they possessed the island of Ulva and some neighbouring lands from about the middle of the fifteenth century, and the first of the clan of whom any authentic mention is made was one John, who died in 1473. He had a son named Dunslass of Ulva, who is mentioned as chief of the clan in 1493; in 1553 the lands



MACLEAN OF COLL.



MACQUARRIE OF ULVA.

of "Ulway" were granted by Queen Mary to Hector MacLean of Duart; and a Gillespick MacQuarrie of Ulva appears in 1609. The chief of the clan was one of those who rendered their submission, and was received into the royal favour when King James IV. tried to over-awe the district by a display of his strength in these then remote and dangerous waters.

#### A PRIOR.

This slab which is in the chapel of St. Oran, has the head three inches in relief, and the other parts from three quarters to one inch. A chalice is above the figure on the dexter side, over which is a four footed beast, winged and horned, probably intended for a dragon. The inscription, which is now almost obliterated, is "HIC JACET FRATER CHRISTI MACGILLRESCOL QUONDAM PRIOR DE Y CUIUS ANIME PROPIETUR DEUS." On the side or profile of the head, where the stone is tolerably perfect, the standing up collar is rather prettily ornamented. It is 5 feet 5½ inches in length.

This stone was at one time carried away and utilised for a more recent grave on the island of Mull; this was not an uncommon occurrence in the islands and parts of the Highlands, the idea being that the gravestone of an individual was to some extent the common property of descendents, or members of the same clan. There are instances of this in quite recent years, the inscriptions or ornaments being chiselled away to make room for new lettering.

#### ABBOT MACKINNON.

This effigy lies within the Cathedral. The mitred head rests upon double cushions, beside which are vestiges of two little angels—one at each side. The upper surface and the more exposed side of the figure are much defaced, but the side near the wall, which, from its position is in a better



A PRIOR



ABBOT MACKINNON.

state of preservation, quite justifies the assertion that it has been a work of art of a high quality. The mitre has been richly decorated, and is of the kind known as *pretiosa*, which was only worn at high feasts. The elevation at the head of the figure shows part of an angel rising from the cleft of the mitre, tasseled cushions, a dove flying upwards, and parts of the wings and skirts of the two small angels.

The inscription, which is very beautifully carved in Mediæval capitals, all along the vertical edge is as follows:—  
 “HIC JACET JOHANNES MAC FINGONE ABBAS DE Y QUI  
 OBIIT ANNO DNI MILLESIMO QUINGENTESIMO  
 CUIUS ANIME PROPITIETUR ALTISSIMUS DEUS AMEN.”

From the fact that there is a blank space after the word *quingentesimo*, it may be inferred that the monument was sculptured in the life-time of the Abbot, by his own directions, which was not an unusual thing to do, and a blank space left for the precise date which was never added. It will be observed that the space remaining at the end of the inscription is filled in with ornamentation, and that even the intervals between the words are decorated with small ornaments, so that it is extremely improbable that a blank space would be left at the place where it occurs, unless for this purpose.

Comparing this figure with others of a similar kind in Scotland, such as those at Fortrose, Elgin, Dunkeld, etc., so far as the vestments of the clergy were altered or modified at different periods, it corresponds in the form of the mitre, etc., with those of the same date. This is no doubt due to the fact that there must have been frequent intercourse between the clergy of Iona and those of other places, at a time when the wild island chiefs seldom travelled so far from their strongholds as to come in contact with their contemporaries, beyond the limits within which the savage Celts held sway. The quality of the carving and the style of design on the small portions of ornament remaining on the stone, unmistakably point to the work having been done, not by a Celtic

carver such as executed nearly all the other effigies and stones, but by one thoroughly familiar with Gothic carving of a high character, and who had been probably brought here for the purpose.

In 1492, John, Abbot of Iona, was one of the Council of John, Lord of the Isles, and witnessed a charter, by that lord and his nephew, the lord of Lochalsh in favour of John MacGilleon of Lochbuie. He was the last Abbot of Iona, and appears to be the same John, Bishop of the Isles, in whose favour the abbey was soon afterwards annexed to the bishopric.<sup>1</sup>

The stone, which measured 6 feet 5 inches by 23½ inches, was probably, on account of its size, brought from the near island of Mull, and is a mixed mica-schist and hornblende.

Lying opposite to this, is a somewhat similar effigy which is attributed to Abbot Kenneth Mackenzie, but in a very dilapidated and defaced condition; he was probably a relative of the Kenneth Mackenzie of Kintail, whose effigy in armour lies in Beaulieu Priory.

#### MACLEAN OF ROSS OF MULL.

This stone, which lies within the Cathedral, has been one of the most characteristic effigies on the island, and from the presence of the long curly beard has evidently been an effort at a correct portrait of the island chief. The shield bears a lymphad with the sail furled, under which is a lion rampant; a sword, of a form much earlier than the probable date of the figure, is thrust behind the belt to which it is also attached; the lower limbs are protected by knee-pieces, ridged greaves, and sollerets with straps for spurs. The feet rest upon a hound, a place which, in the effigies of the Lowlands of Scotland, is almost invariably

(1) *Origines Parochiales.*



MACLEAN OF ROSE OF MULL.



occupied by a lion often clutching a lamb, and where a dog is usually placed on the effigies of ladies.

A very peculiar feature, difficult to account for, is the presence of an object hanging at his right side, partly over the shaft of the spear ; from its form it has been guessed to be a shell for drinking from, which might also be used as a hunting horn. There is precedent for the latter supposition on an effigy in Bute, of a much earlier date, where a hunting horn is carried in the same place, and it may be noted that horns used in the chase sometimes had a moveable piece inserted at the narrow end, thus enabling the wearer to use it as a drinking vessel.

The figure is traditionally associated with "Niall an Roiss" who was the head of a family of MacLeans, which was known as *sliochd á claidimh iaruin*, or the Race of the Iron sword.<sup>1</sup> It probably belongs to the late fifteenth century, and measures 6 feet 6 inches in length.

### ST. MARTIN'S CROSS.

Of the once numerous high crosses which were said to have existed only two now remain entire, that which is commonly known as MacLean's, standing on the roadside between the Nunnery and the Cathedral, and the other known as St. Martin's in front of the Cathedral, about fourteen feet high including the base. On each of these crosses, one side is covered with ornamentation, and the other with animals and figures mostly connected with the Scriptures, the central part of this cross being occupied by a figure of the Holy Virgin and Infant.

The high cross was not a sepulchral monument ; it was dedicatory, or commemorative, and examples are to be found in the Isle of Man, England, Wales, and very numerous in Ireland. While these have a general resemblance to each other, a close examination shows that they differ to some

(1) Graham's *Antiquities of Iona*.



extent from each other, sufficiently to show that they are not imitations of one another, but rather the local developments of a style of sculpture pervading these countries from the tenth to the fifteenth century. Of the two crosses here referred to, MacLean's belongs to a period later than the twelfth century, and that of St. Martin considerably earlier—the key to their age being given by those inscribed Irish crosses of a similar style, whose dates have been ascertained.

### TWO BOULDERS.

Figure 1 is a boulder of granite, with an incised cross, measuring twenty inches in length, which was found within twenty yards of the spot where Columba is supposed by some to have been buried. It has been suggested that it may have been used as a pillow by the Saint, from the statement made by Adamnan that he slept upon a slab, using a stone also as a pillow.

Along with this there is another boulder (fig. 2) preserved in the Cathedral, of nearly the same size, which was found in an outhouse behind the manse.

### MACLEOD OF MACLEOD.

Lying on the ground, within the area of the Cathedral, is a slab of hard, bluish grey stone, on which the contour of a figure is hollowed, with a border. It formed the matrix of what was probably a brass inlay—tradition says silver—but the metal has long been removed. It has been one of the only two examples, on the island, of figures in Lowland armour, and is probably unique in Scotland in so far that the whole figure and the border have been formed of a different material from the stone. The general design is that common to monumental brasses, of which no early examples are known in Scotland; and the form of the

BOULDER.

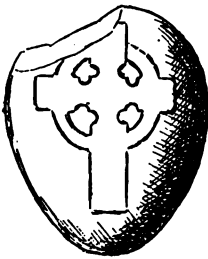


FIG. 1.

BOULDER.

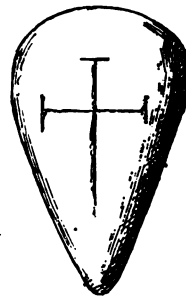
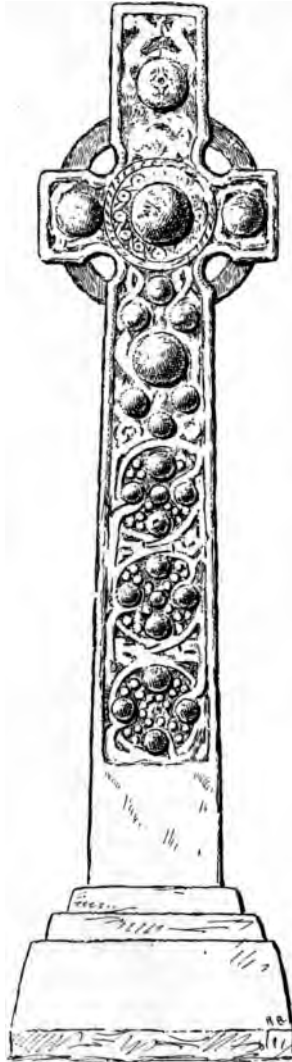
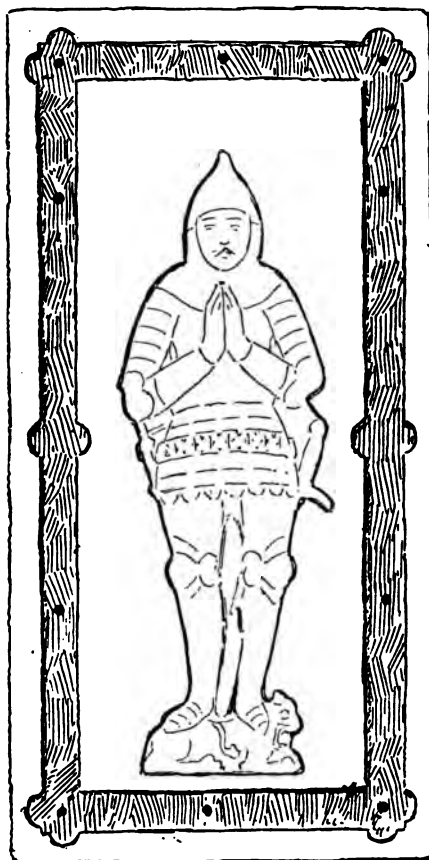


FIG 2.



ST. MARTIN'S CROSS.

figure is here shewn as it probably appeared when complete, the restoration having been made from an incised slab at Creich in Fifeshire, dated 1400, the contour of the figure being very similar. It is remarkable that among the effigies



MACLEOD OF MACLEOD.

of the island chiefs, this, and other three of the MacLeods of the end of the fifteenth and the beginning of the sixteenth centuries, at Rodel in Harris, are among the very few Western effigies showing the contemporary armour of

the periods to which they belong ; from this it might be inferred that the chiefs of this clan had more intercourse than the others with the more cultured parts of Scotland. The border would, of course, contain an inscription.

There were two septs of this once powerful clan. Leod, the progenitor, had two sons—Torquil and Tormaid ; the *Siol Torcuil* possessed the islands of Lewis, Cogeache, and Assint ; the *Siol Tormid* possessed Dunvegan in Skye, Harris, and Glenelg.<sup>1</sup> Torquil MacLeod's castle of Stornoway was stormed by the Earl of Huntly, and he was utterly destroyed in 1506. The MacLeod of Dunvegan fought at Flodden, from whence he returned to his island lair, and with MacLean of Duart, organised a rebellion against King James V.

This is the largest carved stone on the island, and measures 7 feet 9½ inches by 3 feet 10 inches.

#### MAC IAN OF ARDNAMURCHAN.

This slab, which is broken into eight pieces bedded in cement is in the aisle of the Cathedral. The centre is occupied by a lymphad with the sail spread, and above it two figures in canopies. The inscription round the border is, "HIC JACET JOHANNES MACCEAIN DOMINUS DE ARDNAMURCHAN ET MARIOTA MACCEAIN SOROR EIUS SPONSA MACOLINI MACDUFFIE DOMINI DE DUNEVIN IN COLONSE HANC LAPIDEM EMIT SUO FRATRI."

Of the two figures, that to the right is more suggestive of a female than a male figure, although the drawing by the late Mr. Drummond (*Stones of Iona*) made when the stone would be in a better condition than now, shows it as a man with mail tippet and staff in his hand in front of the skirt. The figure to the left, unlike most of the other Hebridean effigies, is clad in the armour worn in the Lowlands in the middle of the fifteenth century. He holds a spear in his

(1) Graham's *Antiquities of Iona*.

right hand, and his left is covered by a small circular object—possibly a small shield or warder, such as were in use by swordsmen for the purpose of catching the stroke of an adversary, and sometimes so made as to snap the sword-blade; the smallest size of such a warder on record, is about 8 inches in diameter, but here it is proportionally less. The complete stone is 6 feet 2 inches by 24½ inches, and dates about 1500 or a few years later.

At the beginning of the sixteenth century, the chief of the MacIans was one of those who were rewarded by King James IV. for sending emissaries regarding the state of the Isles; in 1515, John, Duke of Albany, appointed him his commissioner for reducing the inhabitants of parts of the Isles to obedience, and he was one of those who hastened to join the King's banner when it was unfurled on "Flodden's fatal field."

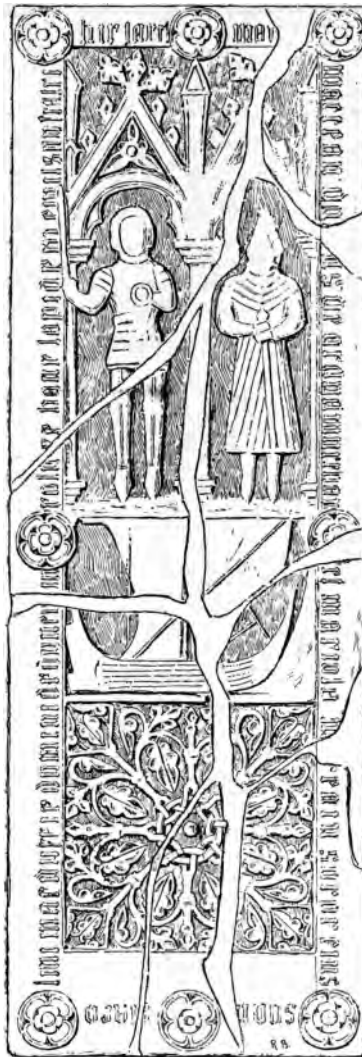
The MacIans held the castle of Mingarry, and were a clan of the MacDonalds, descended from Ian (John), a grandson of Angus Og, Lord of the Isles. A long standing feud existed between them and Donald of Lochalsh who aimed at recovering the principality of the Isles. About 1518, this Donald, with the MacLeods and Alexander of Islay, attacked the MacIans at Craiganairgid in Morven, when the chief and his two sons were slain. In 1625, the clan Ian of Ardnamurchan disappeared as a tribe, partly merging into others, and the name is only found in the fast fading tradition of the West Highlands.<sup>1</sup>

#### INCISED CROSS (WITH INSCRIPTION).

This fragment is so completely defaced as to be almost unrecognisable; its form, however has been preserved in Graham's "Antiquities of Iona."

From the fragment of the inscription it is often supposed to have marked the grave of Alexander MacDonald, second

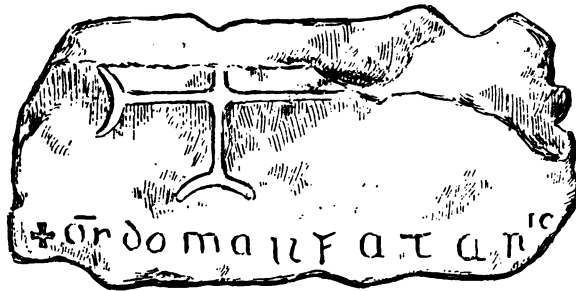
(1) Gregory's *History of the Highlands*.



MAC IAN OF ARDNAMURCHAN.

of the Glengarry line, slain in the fifteenth century. In support of this, the contraction "or" was read *mor*—or great; "donnail" *Donnul* or *Donald*; and "fataric" *Phadruig* or *Patrick*.

This stone, however, appears to be of much greater antiquity. The shape of the cross is distinctly of an early Irish type; the form of the lettering corresponds with that on the base of the high cross of Tuam, and on other Irish work known to be of the tenth and eleventh centuries.<sup>1</sup>



INCISED CROSS (WITH INSCRIPTION).

The formula "Or do"—*oroit* representing the Latin substantive *Oratio*, is also that appearing on Irish work after the tenth century.

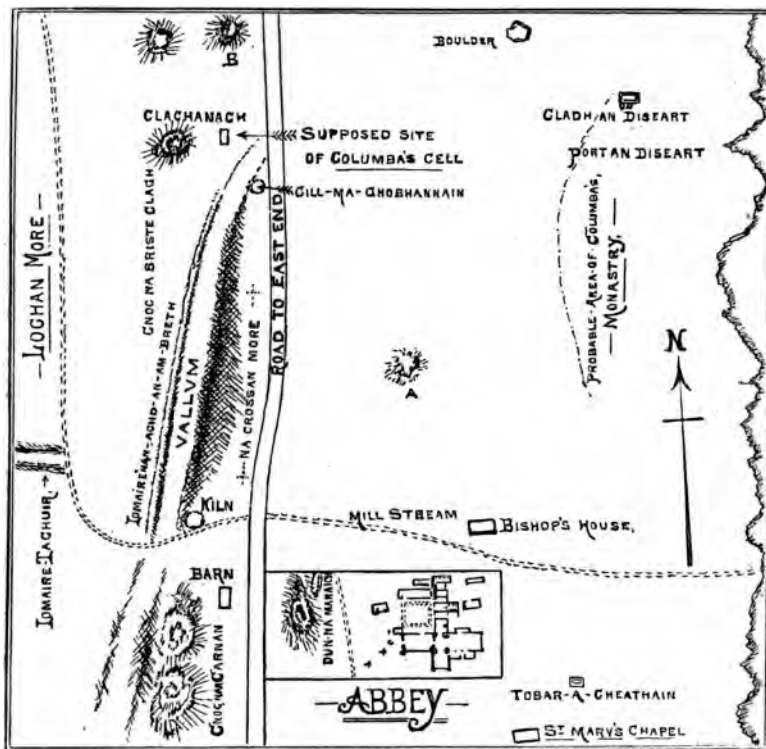
As it is stated that Maol Patrick O'Banan, Bishop of Conor and Down, "a venerable man, full of sanctity, meekness, and purity of heart," died in Iona in 1174,<sup>2</sup> it is not improbable that this stone marked the spot in which he was buried. The inscription would therefore read—"or do Maol Patrick,"—a prayer (or pray) for Maol Patrick.

The fragment measures 2 feet 6 inches in length.

(1) Margaret Stokes' *Early Christian Art in Ireland*.

(2) *Origines Parochiales*.

## APPENDIX.



SITE OF ORIGINAL MONASTERY.

THERE are a few particulars recorded by Adamnan that help to fix, with a fair degree of certainty, the boundary of his monastery, and the relative position of the buildings it enclosed. He speaks



of an enclosure that surrounded the monastery, and calls it a vallum, *i.e.*, a rampart of mixed earth and stones. For the same brother going outside the fence (vallum).<sup>1</sup> The rampart of mixed earth and stones, that begins at the mill-stream and runs parallel to the public road, intersecting it near the house called Clachanach, enclosing on the north-east the sloping ground between it and the sea, is no doubt what he refers to. It is the only well defined and important earthwork in Iona, and is of much the same construction as the ramparts surrounding primitive monastic establishments in Ireland. He relates that "Ernan, uncle of Columba, had come from Himba to visit the Saint. Columba, hearing of his arrival, went to meet him. But while there was a space of about five and twenty paces between them, he, being overtaken by sudden death, and before the Saint could look upon his face in life, breathed his last and fell to the earth—wherefore in the place a cross has been fixed in before the door of the kiln, and another cross stands in like manner fixed in where the Saint stood still when Ernan died."<sup>2</sup> From this we learn that there was a kiln between Columba's cell and the harbour, and that a cross was set up at the door of the kiln, and another about five and twenty paces distant. The remains of a kiln were found on the site indicated in the plan. Tradition records that two large crosses stood near where they are indicated (see plan), and their site was known by the name of Na Crossan More. The ruins of what was called the barn were to be seen in Martin and Pennant's time. The mill from which the stream takes its name would be somewhere near the barn and kiln. Adamnan does not say that there was any special building connected with his monastery used exclusively as a mill, and although he mentions millstones, it does not follow that these were turned by water power in a building used only for that purpose. There is no building set apart for the use of the old-fashioned hand quern still used in remote parts of the Highlands. The grinding is done by hand, either in the barn or other outhouse, and is, beyond doubt, a survival of the custom that prevailed in Adamnan's day. Of one thing we may be sure, that the kiln would be near the

(1) Adam., Bk. II., Chap. 29.

(2) Adam., Bk. I., Chap. 45.

barn, and when water power was afterwards introduced, the mill would be continued near the same place. In other places there might be reasonable doubt regarding the site of a mill; here there can be none, as the stream near the kiln is the only one in the Island that could be used to turn a water-wheel.

On the last day of his life Columba, with his attendant, went to visit the barn, which Adamnan tells us was close at hand. "After this the Saint goes out of the barn, and, returning to the monastery, sits down at the halfway, in which place a cross, afterwards fixed in a millstone, and standing at this day, is to be seen in the side of the road." <sup>1</sup> This was, no doubt, the cross *infixa est* on the spot where Columba stood many years before, and after his death, *molari infix a lapidi*, as the memorial of a greater event than the death of Ernan. This cross was 25 paces from the door of the kiln where the other cross had been erected, and half-way between the barn and the monastery. The place half-way between the barn and the monastery would, therefore, be near the very small hillock in the east side of the road, and marked A on the plan of old sites. Columba's cell would be near Clachanach. Adamnan relates that Columba had once a conflict with demons among the bushes (in saltibus) or woodland pasture. Behind Clachanach there is a level stretch of land, well protected from the prevailing winds, in which the remains of small trees have been found. The pathway that cuts through the Lochan More at the south end of this level tract, was at one time lined with a double row of birch trees. The probability is that all this uncultivated land was at one time covered with birch and hazel. The east side of the island is the only side that affords the necessary protection for such trees whose number and size might be called a wood.

The little hill overlooking the monastery was either the one marked B or the unnamed one immediately behind Clachanach. In any case, the semi artificial elevation within the cathedral enclosure is not the Torr Abb of Adamnan; but Dun Na Manaich.

Culdee Cell, a mile west of the cathedral. Turn off by gate at thatched house near the mill stream, and cross the Lochan More by the road called Iomarie ta Chuir.

(1) Adam., Bk. III., Chap. 23.

Angel Hill, called in the vernacular Sithean More. There was, not so very long ago, a circle of standing stones on the top of this hillock. They have been used for other purposes.

Port a Churraich, first landing place of Columba. At the head of this beach there is a grass mound sixty feet long, which tradition records as the length of Columba's currach, and the place where he buried it when he came ashore. Last summer a section of it was dug to the depth of five feet, but nothing whatever was found.

Port Larraichean (west of Port a Curraich). Six large stone circles. The beach has been raised as if for the purpose of defence.

Carn cul ri Eirrim, a short distance north-west of Port Larraichean.

## FAREWELL TO IONA

## I.

SHRINED among their crystal seas—  
 Thus I saw the Hebrides :  
 All the land with verdure dight ;  
 All the heavens flushed with light ;  
 Purple jewels 'neath the tide ;  
 Hill and meadow glorified ;  
 Beasts at ease, and birds in air ;  
 Life and beauty everywhere !  
 Shrined amid their crystal seas—  
 Thus I saw the Hebrides.

## II.

Fading in the sunset smile—  
 Thus I left the Holy Isle ;  
 Saw it slowly fade away,  
 Through the mist of parting day ;  
 Saw its ruins, grim and old,  
 And its bastions bathed in gold,  
 Rifted crag and snowy beach,  
 Where the seagulls swoop and screech,  
 Vanish, and the shadows fall,  
 To the lonely curlew's call.  
 Fading in the sunset smile—  
 Thus I left the Holy Isle.

## III.

As Columba, old and ill,  
 Mounted on the sacred hill,



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